



*The True Story of the*  
*MUTINY in the "BOUNTY"*

*By the same Author :*

*Fiction*

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*The True Story of the*  
**MUTINY in the "BOUNTY"**

BY  
OWEN RUTTER

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*For*

*BERTIE PEARSON*

*in remembrance of*

*our first passage East*



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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

SINCE Sir John Barrow published *The Eventful History of the Mutiny and Piratical Seizure of H.M.S. "Bounty"* in 1831, many books have been written on that melodrama of the sea, both fact and fiction. My excuse for adding to their number is that one writer after another has perpetuated various errors and misconceptions by accepting what has appeared in print, instead of going to the original source. Moreover, most writers have shown a bias against Bligh, since sympathy is always apt to be with the underdog, who was Fletcher Christian. Therefore, to get at the true facts, it is necessary to go back to the beginning and examine the documents and records of the time.

In the course of my researches into the subject I have studied, edited, and published three documents of first importance: the "Journal of John Fryer," the *Bounty's* master; the "Journal of James Morrison," the boatswain's mate; and the original Minutes of the Court-martial of the mutineers. The first two manuscripts are in the Mitchell Library of New South Wales, the third is in the London Public Record Office. Recently, the Librarian of the Admiralty called my attention to the manuscript log and journal which Bligh delivered to the Lords Commissioners on his re-

turn to England. This I am editing with a view to publication as it stands: a work of nearly 900 folio pages.

It is from these four records, together with some rare pamphlets published soon after the mutiny, that I have compiled this narrative. Since it is written for the general reader rather than the specialist, I have not cared to weigh the pages down with footnotes, but I may say that every statement is vouched for by one authority or another; and the conversations are those actually recorded, not invented by myself to give colour to the tale; for as a writer in the *Times Literary Supplement* said of this one, "Every once in a while life provides a story which fiction cannot beat."

In relating the *Bounty's* voyage to Tahiti, her stay at the island while collecting breadfruit, and the mutiny, I have followed Bligh and Morrison. Bligh and Fryer provide the details for the open-boat voyage. Morrison's journal is the only first-hand authority for the activities of the mutineers after the seizure of the ship until Christian sailed in her to Pitcairn Island. The details of the *Pandora's* voyage and wreck are taken from Morrison and (to a less extent) from the official reports of Captain Edwards and the surgeon's narrative, published together by Sir Basil Thomson in *The Voyage of the "Pandora."* For the description of the court-martial I have followed the original minutes. In writing the tangled history of the early days in Pitcairn Island I have relied mainly on *The Pitcairn Island Register*

*Book*, edited by the late Sir Charles Lucas, the original entry in Captain Folger's log, and the accounts written by Sir Thomas Staines and Lieutenant J. Shillibeer, of H.M.S. *Briton*; Captain Pipon, of H.M.S. *Tagus*; Captain F. W. Beechey, of H.M.S. *Blossom*, and Walter Brodie's *Pitcairn's Island*.

I must record my thanks to the Admiralty Librarian, Mr. D. B. Smith, and to the officials of the Mitchell Library, for much help and courtesy, nor should I neglect to mention Mr. George Mackaness's *Life of Vice-Admiral Bligh*, which is an encyclopædia of information on Bountiana.

Here, then, are the true facts, and an attempt to display with impartiality the character of a commander who, for all his faults, deserved well of his country.

OWEN RUTTER.

THE CROFT,  
WARGRAVE,  
BERKSHIRE.

February 17, 1936.



# I

## THE PASSAGE TO TAHITI

### § 1

TRACING back a dramatic episode of history to its primal cause is a diverting game; and those who play it will find that one of Nature's most generous gifts to man caused the loss of a well-found ship to the British Navy and the acquisition of a flourishing colony to the British Crown. For if Captain Cook, during his first voyage in the *Endeavour*, had not taken particular interest in the breadfruit he saw growing in Tahiti, there would have been no mutiny in the *Bounty* a century and a half ago, and no settlement of English-speaking men and women on the lonely island of Pitcairn to-day.

Earlier explorers of the Pacific, such as Dampier and Anson, had mentioned the breadfruit, but it was Cook who brought it to the notice of the general public in England. Then the merchants and sugar-planters of the West Indies became interested. They had learnt that the fruit remained in season for eight months of the year, and that it was the staple diet of the Pacific islanders. They thought it likely to prove equally suitable as food for the slaves on the

plantations, and since the West Indian islands lie in nearly the same latitude as Tahiti, it was reasonable to suppose that the tree would flourish there. In 1777 the Royal Society of Arts offered a gold medal to whomever should succeed in transplanting the breadfruit to the West Indies. This offer produced no result, and finally, at a meeting held at the London Tavern, the Standing Committee of West India Planters and Merchants resolved to start a fund which would supplement the Society's reward.

Even this offer was insufficient inducement for anyone to organize a private expedition, but Sir Joseph Banks, the President of the Royal Society, who had accompanied Cook to Tahiti in 1769, took the matter up on behalf of the planters, and George III gave assent to his proposal that the Admiralty should fit out a ship to collect a supply of young fruits at Tahiti and transport them to St. Vincent and Jamaica.

For this purpose the Navy Board bought a merchant-ship, the *Bethia*, at a cost of £1,950. She was ship-rigged, 90 feet long and 215 tons burden, with plenty of stowage, and ornamented with a figure-head of a woman in riding habit. She was re-christened the *Bounty* in recognition of His Majesty's favour, and Lieutenant William Bligh was given the command.

During the passing years the story of the *Bounty* and of those who played their parts in her eventful history has become encrusted with many fallacies, which have clung as closely to the tale as barnacles to a ship's bottom. One of

these is that Bligh entered the Navy from the Merchant service. Actually he did nothing of the sort. He was born in Plymouth in 1754, and was brought up at Tinten, St. Tudy, in Cornwall. It was the custom of the time for a boy who wished to become an officer to be entered on the books of a ship as an able seaman until a vacancy among the midshipmen occurred, and when he was just under the age of sixteen Bligh shipped as an A.B. in H.M.S. *Hunter*, receiving his warrant as a midshipman six months later. He learnt his profession in a hard school. In those days the conditions of the service, both for officers and men, were deplorable. Corruption was rife; commands were procured by purchase or by favour; pay was bad; discipline was harsh to the point of brutality; flogging was the normal punishment for the most trivial offence; the ships were insanitary, the food vile; the crews were recruited, often forcibly, from the gaols and the scum of the seaport towns.

Life in one of His Majesty's ships during that period was a hardening process under which only the robust could survive, and when judging Bligh's character and actions, it is necessary to bear in mind the influence which shaped him during those impressionable five years he served as a midshipman. His was no phlegmatic character. He had the sensitive, impatient temperament of the Celt, quick to anger, but as quick to forget. Through what bitter experiences he may have passed in those early years we cannot tell; but one thing is clear: having no strings to



pull, he worked hard at his profession to gain advancement, specializing in survey-work and navigation with such success that in 1776 Captain Cook appointed him sailing-master in the *Resolution*.

During that four years' circumnavigation of the globe he must have learnt much from his great captain, and not least the kindness and sympathy with which Cook invariably treated the natives of the Pacific islands and the professional care with which he looked after his men. Bligh profited by those lessons. For whatever his faults may have been, indifference to the welfare of his ship's company was not one of them.

## § 2

Bligh himself supervised the fitting out of the *Bounty* at Deptford, with the assistance of Sir Joseph Banks. When they had done with her she was like a floating conservatory, the large cabin between decks being set aside for the bread-fruit plants and fitted with a false floor cut with holes for the pots in which the plants were to be brought home. Bligh had a small cabin on one side to sleep in, the master's cabin being opposite.

Although not armed as a man-of-war, the *Bounty* was an "armed vessel," and as such she is always described in the official records. She carried 4 short four-pounders and 10 half-pound

swivels, and was stored and victualled for eighteen months. In addition to the usual allowance of salt meat and biscuit, she carried supplies of portable soup, essence of malt, cheese, sourkroust, dried malt, and a proportion of wheat and barley to be issued in lieu of oatmeal. The live stock included pigs, sheep, and poultry. A quantity of iron bars, beads, looking-glasses, and trinkets were taken for trade with the natives.

The ship's company numbered forty-six all told, and the officers included the master, John Fryer, who was responsible for the navigation of the ship, the rank corresponding with that of the modern navigating lieutenant; the boatswain, William Cole; the gunner, William Peckover; the surgeon, Thomas Huggan; two master's mates, and five midshipmen, three of whom joined the ship as able seamen, but messed with the others, since there was keen competition to go on this voyage, which promised promotion. A botanist and a gardener were taken to supervise the collection of the plants and to tend them once they were on board. A full list of the officers and men, with notes on their subsequent history, will be found at the end of the book. For purposes of economy, and because the accommodation was so limited, the ship carried no purser, and Bligh himself performed the duties of this office, assisted by the clerk, John Samuel. This was customary in small ships sent on long expeditions. But although the commander combined the two offices, he received less pay, since he was expected to make it up from the profit on

the purser. The possibilities of abuse are too obvious to need comment.

When stored and victualled the ship proceeded to Spithead, and on November 24 Lord Hood gave Bligh his final orders. Four days later the ship's company had two months' pay in advance and the next day the *Bounty* sailed.

Ill-luck seems to have pursued her from the start. Again and again she put to sea, but each time she was forced back by contrary winds, and it was not until December 23 that she dropped her pilot abreast of the Needles and stood away down Channel with a fresh easterly gale.

There must have been many of those superstitious sailors who saw in that unpropitious start an omen of ill.

### § 3

The bad weather continued, but on Christmas Day Bligh ordered a rum ration to be served, and the whole ship's company had beef and plum pudding for dinner. On the 27th the wind increased to a heavy gale with violent squalls. A tremendous wave damaged the boats and carried away a spare topsail yard; another stove the stern to pieces between the cabin windows, and washed overboard seven barrels of beer; but the sea was too high for Bligh to venture to heave-to, and he was obliged to reef his main topsail and scud under the foresail before the wind. It was impossible to light a fire in the galley, and

Bligh therefore ordered grog for all hands in addition to their beer to lighten their discomfort.

The gale blew itself out in a couple of days. Bligh set the hands to airing the biscuit which had been damaged by water, and got all the men's wet clothing, bedding, and hammocks up on deck, cleaning and drying the quarters below. This done, he ordered hot water to be got ready, so that every man was able to wash his dirty linen and hang it up to dry in the sun.

In order to complete his water and to repair the damage, Bligh determined to put in to Tene-riffe, and anchored in Santa Cruz Roads on January 6, 1788. Here he took on board 863 gallons of wine for the ship's use; also some fresh beef, and a supply of pumpkins and potatoes, which were all the supplies he could procure. According to the journal of James Morrison, the boatswain's mate, the men threw most of the beef overboard as soon as it was served out, since, he observes, they "were not yet sufficiently come to their stomachs to eat what they supposed to be either ass or mule."

The *Bounty* weighed on January 10, and stood to the south-west with a fine breeze and pleasant weather. Bligh now divided the ship's company into three watches. This is one of the many proofs of his consideration. The normal system of watch and watch meant that the men were on deck every other four hours and had little time for rest and sleep. He also attached great importance to the men's dancing. Before leaving England he had had great difficulty in finding a

man who could play the fiddle, and finally had decided to take one, Michael Byrn, who was "two-thirds blind," rather than sail without one. Every evening from five o'clock until eight Michael Byrn plied his fiddle, and so convinced was Bligh of the value of the exercise and recreation to his men's health that on one occasion he stopped the allowance of grog from two men who refused to dance.

In order that he might have another officer to share the watches with the master and the gunner, Bligh appointed Fletcher Christian, one of the master's-mates, to act as lieutenant. This is the first evidence we have of Bligh's attitude to Christian, whose abilities he records as being "equal to the task." The two men were not strangers to each other. Christian had already sailed with Bligh on two voyages to the West Indies. Bligh had taken considerable trouble in teaching him his profession and had recommended him for his appointment in the *Bounty*.

Probably Christian originally came to his captain's notice through the good offices of Mrs. Bligh, who, like himself, had family connections with the Isle of Man; for although Christian's home was at Cockermouth, in Cumberland (Moorland Close, the farm-house where he was born, is still standing), his family could trace its descent back to William McChristian, who in 1422 had been a representative in the Manx House of Keys.

When Christian joined the *Bounty* he was a young man of twenty-two, with a promising

career before him, and Bligh's favourite officer. Time was to change that relationship into a tragic feud. But it is evident that at the outset of the voyage Bligh had nothing but friendly feelings for Christian and a high opinion of his qualities as a seaman.

The first incident which marred the harmony of the voyage occurred soon after Christian's promotion. The fine weather continued, and Bligh ordered the cheese to be brought up on deck to air. James Morrison states that when the cooper opened one of the casks Bligh declared that two cheeses were missing. They must have been stolen, he thundered. The cooper reminded him that the cask had been opened while the ship was still lying in the Thames, and that by the order of Mr. Samuel, the clerk, the cheeses had been sent to Bligh's house. Without further inquiry Bligh ordered the cheese ration to be stopped from both officers and men until the deficiency should be made good, and told the cooper that he would give him "a dam'd good flogging if he said any more about it."

James Morrison records this incident with convincing detail, giving the name of the sailor who declared that he had taken the cheeses, together with a cask of vinegar, to Bligh's house. Bligh does not mention the matter in his official log, but in his still unpublished "Remarks on Morrison's Journal" (the manuscript is in the Mitchell Library), he asserts that the cheeses were stolen after the cask had been opened, during the dinner interval, and because he considered that the theft

could not have been committed without the knowledge of most of the ship's company, he ordered the ration to be stopped rather than charge the value of the cheese against wages. This form of punishment is always likely to breed discontent, whether in a ship or a school. It caused considerable feeling in the *Bounty*, for Morrison says that when a ration of butter was issued without cheese, the men refused it, saying that if they were to accept it they would be "tacitly acknowledging the supposed theft."

As the ship approached the Equator Bligh had the pumpkins he had bought at Teneriffe served out in lieu of biscuit. When the men found that they were to have only a pound of pumpkin for two pounds of biscuit, they refused the ration. This, Morrison tells us, brought Bligh up on deck in a violent rage. He summoned all hands, and told Samuel to call upon the first man on the list of each mess and see who would dare to refuse the ration, or any other that he should order.

"You damned infernal scoundrels," he stormed, "I'll make you eat grass or anything you can catch before I've done with you!"

The men accepted the pumpkin without further demur, but Morrison mentions that the ration was so small that they preferred to pool it and allow the cooks of the different messes to draw lots for the whole. To this Bligh's subsequent reply was that he had bought the pumpkins for the men's good, as the only fruit that would keep.

Soon after this the men began to complain that

the issue of beef and pork appeared "very light," and appealed to the master. Bligh again ordered all hands aft and treated them to another tirade. The rations were issued by his orders, he told them, and it was useless for them to make any complaint, since he was the best judge of what was right and wrong, and he threatened to flog the first man who made any further complaint. Bligh's answer to this charge was that an officer always attended the opening of the casks, and the weighing of the beef and pork. He vehemently asserted that every person had "as much as was necessary."

Now everyone who has served in a ship at sea or in a regiment on land knows perfectly well that there is nothing unusual in men grumbling about their food, even in these days, when rations are better than they ever were before. In 1788 their grumbling undoubtedly had more justification, for the food consisted mainly of salt beef and salt pork issued on alternate days. Even so, it is necessary not to attach too much importance to these incidents, and others like them, which Morrison describes. It must be remembered that Morrison wrote up his journal after Bligh had branded him as a mutineer, a fact which very nearly cost him his life, so that it is only to be expected that he should bring out everything he could against Bligh, and although his details are circumstantial, he is scarcely likely to have been impartial. He does not suggest that it is the duty of a commander with a long, and possibly protracted, voyage ahead of him to



husband his stores so far as he reasonably can. Bligh did so, and when he found that his methods gave rise to discontent he did not mince his words. He had a tough crew to deal with, and he had no intention of allowing them to get out of hand.

Normally that was the kind of language the men understood and respected. After the trouble about the meat they made no further complaint. Not so the officers, however. Morrison tells us that they were "not so easy satisfied and made frequent murmurings among themselves about the smallness of their Allowance." Here, then, was a pretty example for the men: the officers openly grumbling about their captain when the ship had not been a month at sea. The point needs emphasis, for there seems little doubt that had the *Bounty's* officers shown more loyalty and discipline, affairs might never have come to the pass they did.

Bligh, on his side, was not a man to inspire love. He was an irritable, truculent, overbearing fellow, undoubtedly a driver rather than a leader of men. That, however, did not make him necessarily unfit to command a ship, for apart from his professional abilities, he was an efficient enough seaman never to neglect his men's health. For example, he had all their water filtered through dripstones which he procured at Teneriffe for the purpose, and never let the crew remain in wet clothes longer than was necessary. On February 10, when the *Bounty* crossed the Equator, he appears in a light so different from

the popular conception of him that the passage is worth quoting from his log:

"This afternoon those who had never crossed the Line before underwent the usual ceremony except ducking, which I never would allow, for of all Customs it is the most brutal and inhuman. Twenty-seven men and officers were therefore Tarred and shaved with a piece of iron hoop, and the officers to pay Two Bottles of Rum and the men one, which I promised to answer for, and gave every One a half pint of Wine as soon as the business was over and dancing begun."

Nor was Bligh so brutal a commander as he is sometimes represented. He was not in the habit of inflicting corporal punishment without a good reason and as the regulations allowed, nor did he ever keel-haul a man. It was not until the ship had been at sea six weeks that he had to log his first serious punishment, when he ordered one of the seamen, Mathew Quintal, two dozen lashes for "Insolence and Contempt to the master," and then he recorded it with the observation: "Untill this afternoon I had hoped I could have performed the Voyage without punishment to any One."

#### § 4

March 23 found the *Bounty* off the coast of Terra del Fuego. The weather was still fine and the ship's company in high spirits, with every prospect of a fair passage round the Horn.

But in those latitudes fair weather is usually

the forerunner of foul, as they were soon to find. When they were clear of Staten Land the gale struck them, with a high sea from the south-west. They got the top-gallant masts down and prepared to weather the storm. It became bitterly cold, and the men asked that their rum might be issued without water. Bligh agreed, and in order that they might have a hot breakfast, he issued a daily ration of wheat, with butter and sugar, while for dinner he ordered "a large quantity of Portable Soup to be boiled in their Pease."

Morrison asserts that the ration of wheat—one gallon for forty-six men—was so small that four men in a mess frequently drew lots for breakfast, "nor was the Officers a hair behind the Men at it." The division of the scanty allowances caused many broils in the galley, in one of which the cook had two of his ribs broken, until at last the master's mate of the watch had to superintend the division.

Bligh spent three weeks trying to double the Horn in the teeth of violent storms and "a Prodigious Head Sea" which exceeded any he had ever seen. On April 11 he had hopes that, after the full moon, they might have a favourable wind, *but it remained fixed in the same quarter.* Three days later he recorded:

"Repeated Gales seem now to become more violent, the Squalls so excessively severe that I dare scarce show any canvas to it. The motion of the ship is so very quick and falls so steep between the Seas that it is impossible to stand without Man ropes across the Decks."

The ship performed well, however. "It would not have been possible for a laboursome Ship to have kept her Masts," wrote Bligh. The officers and men responded to the demands she made upon them, as sailors will, with the result that, in spite of the continuous gales, the ship never lost a spar or a yard of canvas. Bligh handsomely acknowledges that everyone bore "the fatigue with Cheerfulness and Health," although the squalls of hail and sleet reduced the ship to bare poles and battened hatches, and were so severe that the men who were obliged to be aloft became almost incapable of getting below and some of them for a while even lost the power of speech.

Bligh on his side did his best for them and gave up his cabin "to the use of those poor fellows who had wet Births." An anonymous writer in the *United Service Journal* (April, 1831) stated that Bligh kept the youngest midshipman, Peter Heywood, at the mast-head for eight hours at a stretch, during the worst spell of weather off Cape Horn, but there is no evidence to prove this, and it appears highly unlikely. Every man was needed during those terrible days when the very existence of the ship was in peril, and, apart from all else, Bligh was not likely to have endangered the life of an officer. Actually, the evidence is the other way, and the simple words of the log, recorded during those moments of distress, without any flavour of hypocrisy, are the best proof of Bligh's genuine solicitude for his men:

"I took Care to Nurse them when Off duty

with every comfort in my power. The Invalids I made attend and dry their Cloaths & keep a good fire in every Night so that no Man when he took his Watch had a Wet Rag about him. They were at three Watches, and When lying too I would only suffer two Men on deck at a time. I gave them all additional Slop Cloaths, and I make their meal pleasant and wholesome as may be Observed in the different days Occurences."

Bligh now found at the end of each day that he was losing ground. The ship began to complain and needed the pumps every hour. The westerly gales continued to buffet her without intermission, and by April 17 he felt that it was hopeless to make any further attempt to beat round the Cape against the wind. Although his orders had been to take the Horn route, he had, before sailing, sagely obtained discretionary powers from the Admiralty, and accordingly he now determined to bear away for the Cape of Good Hope. He ordered all hands aft, and after thanking them for their unremitting devotion to duty, told them of his decision. The news was received with three cheers and the ship was put before the wind. A pig was killed and issued in lieu of the day's rations. Bligh says that it made the men an excellent meal. Morrison complains that it was all skin and bone, but admits that it was greedily devoured, "every one by this time being fairly Come to their Appetites."

## § 5

Once the ship had reached a more temperate latitude the sick recovered fast. The hatches were opened and the stoves were lighted so that the ship could be aired and dried between decks. The voyage proceeded without event, and on May 22 Bligh sighted Table Mountain, "with every Man and Officer in as good health as when they left England," to quote from his official despatch to the Admiralty.

Since Table Bay was considered unsafe riding at that time of year he took the ship into Simon's Bay, where he dropped anchor on the 24th, saluting the fort with 13 guns, to which the Dutch replied with an equal number.

He called upon the Governor, Mr. Van der Graaf, from whom he received every assistance in procuring provisions and materials for refitting. The sails were repaired, and the rigging overhauled. The ship was caulked throughout, for she had become so leaky during the passage from the Horn as to require pumping every hour. Fresh meat, soft bread, and plenty of vegetables were issued daily to the ship's company. Bligh rested his men for thirty-eight days, and sailed again on July 1, reporting to the Admiralty that his ship was thoroughly refitted and his people in perfect health.

Having passed the lonely island of St. Paul, in the South Indian Ocean, he put in to Adventure Bay, Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), for wood and water on August 21, finding no signs that

any ship had touched there since the visit of the *Resolution* and the *Discovery* in 1777.

He had brought with him from Cape Town a number of young apple trees, some of which he now proceeded to plant with the advice and assistance of Nelson, the botanist, together with the seeds of other fruit trees, and some onions, cabbage-roots, and potatoes. He did his best to make friends with the natives by offering them presents, which, after some reluctance, they accepted, catching the beads and nails thrown to them with great dexterity. They went quite naked and met him without any sign of hostility, although he found it impossible to understand a word of what he calls their "clattering" speech.

While the ship was still in Adventure Bay Bligh had his first clash with William Purcell, the carpenter. It was the first of many, for Purcell, knowing that his warrant protected him from flogging, invariably insisted on standing by what he considered to be his rights. The facts were these. Bligh, not wishing to delay his voyage more than necessary, was pressing on with the wooding and watering ashore, leaving Fryer with only a small working party on board. His orders were that the officers should be employed as well as the men, but when Fryer told Purcell to help hoist the water into the hold he refused to obey, and was equally adamant when Bligh himself returned aboard. He would do anything in his line, he declared, but he would not do the work of an able seaman.

Bligh promptly had the evidence of the wit-

nesses to this behaviour taken down and signed. He then told Purcell that he should have no food until he obeyed orders, and threatened to punish anyone who should give him any. Purcell then gave in and went to work.

"It was for the good of the Voyage," Bligh observes, "that I should not make him or any Man a prisoner, the few I have even in the good State of health I keep them, are but barely sufficient to carry on the duty of the Ship. It could then answer no good purpose to lose the use of a healthy Strong Young Man in my situation."

Bligh sailed for Tahiti on September 4, taking a course to the south of New Zealand, and on the 19th discovered a cluster of small rocky islands, never before recorded, which he called the Bounty's Isles, the name they bear to this day.

After the ship had been a month at sea the men's health, hitherto so good, began to fail, and symptoms of scurvy made their appearance. Bligh gave them essence of malt with portable soup and rice, stopped the salt meat, and issued flour in lieu. One of the seaman, James Valentine, developed what Bligh calls an "asthmatic complaint," for which the surgeon, Huggan, bled him. His health improved, but the arm which had been bled turned septic and he died.

Bligh had never had much use for the surgeon, who spent most of his time drinking in his cabin. He probably ascribed Valentine's death to Huggan's neglect, and being on bad terms with Fryer as well, the three decided to mess in their own cabins for the rest of the voyage. After this



they had several disputes, according to Morrison, and "seldom spoke but on duty; and even *then* with much apperant reserve."

The life of a commander of a ship at sea is always a solitary one. Bligh's position was now one of complete isolation, divorced even from the fellowship of those from whose society he might have derived some relief from the monotony of shipboard. In a less degree this monotony was shared by the whole ship's company, for since the *Bounty* was not a fully armed man-of-war there were no drills, nor had the men a consort to compete with or to criticize.

The trouble between Bligh and Fryer came to a head on October 9, when Samuel presented for Fryer's signature the boatswain's and carpenter's expense books and the ship's monthly books for August and September. Fryer sent the clerk to Bligh with a request that he would sign a certificate to the effect that "he had done nothing amiss during his time on board." Bligh then told Fryer that he disapproved of his making any such conditions before he signed the books. Whereupon Fryer walked out abruptly, saying that he refused to sign.

Bligh acted with his usual forcefulness and promptitude.

"I now ordered the Hands to be turned up," he records in his log. "Read the Articles of War, with other particular parts of Instructions relative to the Matter, when this troublesome Man saw his error and before the whole Ship's Company signed the Books."

Morrison corroborates this incident, but mentions that when Fryer took the pen he said, "I sign in obedience to your Orders, and this may be cancelled hereafter."

Whether Fryer suspected Bligh of cooking the ship's accounts or whether he was afraid of some adverse report Bligh might make upon him (or both) is not abundantly clear. What is clear, however, is that when the *Bounty* dropped anchor in Port Royal, or Matavai Bay, Tahiti, on October 26, 1788, having sailed just over 27,000 miles since leaving England, she was not a happy ship.

## II

### COLLECTING THE BREADFRUIT

#### § I

WHEN the *Bounty* came to anchor in Matavai Bay, Bligh affixed to the mizzen-mast the orders he had drawn up to regulate the intercourse between the ship's company and the islanders. These rules display his circumspection as a commander no less than his fair intentions towards the primitive people he had come so far to visit.

His desire was to avoid any possibility of a clash between the sailors and the natives, and to that end he enjoined everyone on board to do his utmost to establish friendly relations with the Tahitians and to treat them with every kindness. No one was to take from them by violent means anything they might steal, and no one was ever to fire except in defence of his own life. In order to prevent the pilfering to which he knew the Tahitians were addicted, he directed that both officers and men should take care that none of the arms and implements in their charge was stolen, and warned them that any article so lost would be charged against their wages. Finally, to avoid any disputes, none of the ship's company was to trade personally with the natives

for food or curiosities, but all such transactions were to be made through the medium of an officer who would be appointed for the purpose.

These regulations were admirable. Had every ship's captain shown such far-sighted consideration the history of Pacific exploration would have fewer tragedies to tell; and the day before the ship reached port Bligh had displayed further evidence of his humanity. Realizing that he could not expect that "the intercourse of my people with the natives should be of a very reserved nature" (as he puts it), he ordered the surgeon to hold medical inspection of the ship's company, and "had the satisfaction to learn, from his report, that they were all free from any venereal complaint."

Such had been the good impression left by the officers and men of the *Resolution* and *Discovery* that the chiefs and their people welcomed Bligh with the utmost friendliness, showering hospitality upon him. Hundreds of canoes surrounded the ship, filled with natives bringing pigs, breadfruit, and coconuts, and soon the *Bounty's* deck was so full that Bligh observes, "I could scarce find my own people." So great was the crowd that he found it impossible to work the ship to a more secure station nearer the shore, but rather than disoblige his visitors by asking them to leave, he decided to remain where he was until next morning.

A brisk trade was carried on, with Peckover, the gunner, in charge. Pigs and fruit of every kind were exchanged for hatchets, knives, files,

gimlets, combs, and looking-glasses. Curiosities were not in demand, for, as Morrison remarks, "no curiosity struck the seaman so forcibly as a roasted pig and some breadfruit."

Early next day Bligh weighed and worked the *Bounty* farther into the bay, mooring her a quarter of a mile from the shore. Once more the natives flocked to the ship, and several chiefs came on board with presents, which Bligh reciprocated in kind. Later a man brought off Captain Cook's portrait which had been left with the chief, Otoo, in 1777. Cook had told Otoo to show the picture to the captain of any English ship that called, promising that it would be acknowledged as a token of friendship, and ever since then it had been regarded with great veneration.

Bligh found the natives much altered for the better since his previous visit in 1777. Then it had been impossible to prevent them from stealing, but on the *Bounty's* arrival there was only one case of theft, that of a man stealing a tin pot. Bligh took the pot from the man, but his chief flew into a violent rage, chased the pilferer round the deck, and beat him with a billet of wood. He then asked Bligh to flog anyone else he caught thieving. Bligh grimly promised he would.

During the morning he went ashore with Poeno, one of the Matavai chiefs, who offered him the same ground he had used on his previous visit for pitching his tents. Then they crossed the beach, and walked along a path shaded by breadfruit trees until they came to Poeno's house, where his wife and sister were at work dyeing cloth. A

mat was spread for Bligh, and when he was seated refreshments were brought, everyone behaving with "great decorum and attention."

Having stayed talking for an hour to Poeno and his wife and sister, Bligh rose to leave, whereupon the ladies ("they deserve to be called such from their natural and unaffected manners and elegance," Bligh observes) clothed him with a mat and a piece of their finest cloth, in the Tahitian fashion, and each taking him by the hand led him to the beach and took leave of him, promising to visit him on board in the afternoon.

That is an agreeable picture; and in all Bligh's dealings with the Tahitians he is seen at his best: tolerant, considerate, ready to conform to their customs. He had the chiefs to dinner on board almost daily, and took infinite pains to learn all he could of their religion, language, and social life, diligently returning to a subject again and again until he had mastered the details. He records in his log that he found them "to possess every degree of sensibility and Affection. They are kind and human to one the other beyond a doubt and are tender parents. What then have we need of more to prove, that in their mutual civilization they have the leading virtues of a happy life?" As for the island itself, he considered it "the Paradise of the World, and if happiness could result from situation and convenience, here it is to be found in the highest perfection."

Later he discovered certain darker sides to the Tahitians' customs, but in general he retained his admiration of their characters, and remained on

the best of terms with them until the ship sailed, always mingling with them freely and, upon occasions, "joining noses" and exchanging names with the chiefs, as local custom prescribed. He was a shrewd and sympathetic observer and the log abounds with pen-pictures such as this:

"It is delightful to see the swarms of little Children which are in every part of the Country at the different amusements, some flying kites, some swinging to a bough of a Tree in a Rope, Wrestling, taking a peice of line in a variety of shapes off one the other's hands (in some places of England called the Cat's cradle) and a variety of other little tricks which I believe are not to be found with a less docile and inoffensive set of People."

Even the pilfering (of which there were, inevitably, cases as the days went by) he ascribes more to the sailors' carelessness than to the natives' vice. On one occasion he gave the ship's butcher twelve lashes "for suffering his Cleaver to be stolen" and suggests that had the *Bounty* been lying in the Thames, a hundred times as much would have been stolen in the same time.

## § 2

Bligh had issued orders that no one on board was to mention the object of the voyage until he had had an opportunity of discussing it with the chiefs, lest mistrust or apprehension should be aroused. This is another proof of his tact in

dealing with primitive people, and after some days he broached the subject to Tynah (formerly known as Otoo), one of the Matavai Chiefs, in an extremely delicate way, suggesting that since King George had sent many presents and good things to Tynah, Tynah might care to send something to King George in return. The generous chief assured Bligh that he would be only too ready to do so, and went through a list of things which might be acceptable to the King, including the breadfruit. That gave Bligh just the cue he wanted. He told Tynah that King George would like nothing better than breadfruit plants, since the trees did not grow in his country, whereupon Tynah promised that a large supply should be put on board.

Having thus astutely contrived that the offer should come from the chief, Bligh set about the collection of the plants without delay. A tent was pitched on the ground Poeno had allotted, and a shed was built for the reception of the plants which Nelson, the botanist, and his assistant, secured. Bligh sent a guard ashore under the command of Christian and fixed a boundary which none of the natives was to pass without permission. Nelson also made a garden in which he planted the seeds brought from the Cape of Good Hope, among them melons, cucumbers, and Indian corn; he distributed a quantity to the natives themselves, including some almond and rose seeds. All these good things, Bligh told the natives, were sent by King George to his friends in Tahiti, and Tynah, not to be outdone in generosity, promised



that he should have a great many breadfruit plants in return.

While this work went on apace, the seamen led a life of ease and plenty, fraternizing with the natives, and dallying with the Tahitian maidens who, as Bligh had predicted, were gracious with their favours, to such effect that it was not long before he had to record a number of "venereals" on the sick list, which thereafter remained more or less constant until the ship sailed.

Harmony seems to have prevailed in the ship until early in December, when Bligh had more trouble with the carpenter. Bligh had told him to cut a large stone which some natives had brought off to the ship with the request that it might be made fit for them to grind their hatchets on.

"I will not cut the stone, for it will spoil my chisel," declared Purcell, "and though there is a law to take away my clothes, there is none to take away my tools."

Bligh confined him to his cabin, but returned him to duty next day.

Shortly after this incident, Huggan, the surgeon, died, according to Bligh from "drunkenness and indolence." He had spent his time in drinking and sleeping, and could never be brought to take half a dozen turns on deck at a time throughout the voyage. He was buried next day on Point Venus, and a board was fixed to a tree near his grave with an inscription to his memory. Thomas Ledward, surgeon's mate, was appointed to act for him. Although qualified, he had been

entered on the ship's books as an able seaman at the suggestion of Bligh, who did not care to trust the lives of his men with only one medical officer on board, although there was no provision for a surgeon's mate.

Bad weather set in during December, and Bligh saw that the bay was too exposed for safety. He therefore got on board the plants which Nelson had transplanted into pots, 774 in all, struck the camp ashore and on December 25 sailed round to the protected harbour of Toahroah, six miles west of Point Venus, where the modern town of Papeete now stands. The breadfruit pots were moved ashore to a pleasantly situated post, and arrangements were made for continuing the collection.

Since the ship's company had spent Christmas Day in what Bligh calls "much fatigue and trouble," they kept it on the 28th, Bligh having all the chiefs to dine with him on shore.

### § 3

All these weeks Bligh seems to have had little trouble with his men. Apart from the affair with the carpenter he logged only one crime: Mathew Thompson, A.B., being given twelve lashes for "insolence and disobedience of orders."

If we are to believe Morrison, however, discontent was brewing in the ship. With his usual foresight Bligh was having a large supply of pork salted for the long passage to the West Indies,

and by December the trade in pigs began to fall off. Whereupon Bligh, according to Morrison, took over every pig that was brought to the ship, big, small, dead, or alive. He even commandeered some of those belonging to Fryer, and when Fryer remonstrated Bligh told him that "he would convince him that evry thing was *his*, as soon as it was on board, & that he would take nine-tenths of any man's property & let him see who dared to say any thing to the Contrary." After that the seamen's pigs were seized without ceremony, so that "it became a favour for a man to get a Pound extra of his own hog."

The natives, seeing that the pigs were appropriated as soon as they were brought aboard, waited until Bligh was ashore to bring presents to their friends. Bligh, not to be outwitted, ordered a book to be kept in the binnacle and told the mate of the watch to enter up the number and weight of the pigs that reached the ship. The natives then killed the pigs and, having cut them up, wrapped the joints in leaves and brought them off in baskets half-full of breadfruit or coconuts. Bligh never learnt to suspect this artifice, and by this means, observes Morrison, "provisions were still plenty."

Exactly how much truth there is in this story it is difficult to say. Bligh, in his reply to Morrison, declared that he could not have the men's live pigs running about the ship, and that the gunner paid the recipient of the gift the market price; this was an adze or two, according to size. But Morrison's charge, although it may

be prejudiced, cannot be disregarded, and it would appear that Bligh was undoubtedly over-zealous in procuring provisions for the ship. Whether it was this general discontent at his methods, or whether it was the general allurements of the island life, that led to the first really serious breach of discipline in the ship there is nothing to show. Whatever the cause, it should have put Bligh on his guard.

At 4 a.m. on the morning of January 5, 1789, the relief of the watch found the small cutter missing, and Thomas Hayward, the midshipman of the middle watch, asleep at his post. Bligh was informed, and immediately turned up all hands. On the roll being read it was found that three men were absent: Charles Churchill, the master-at-arms, and two seamen, William Muspratt and John Millward. Millward had been on sentry duty from midnight to 2 a.m. so that the presumption was that the men had made off in the cutter during that period, while the mate of the watch was asleep. They had taken with them eight muskets and a supply of ammunition.

Bligh put Hayward in irons and sent Fryer off after the deserters in the large cutter. Fryer had not gone far when he met the missing boat, which five natives had found abandoned on the beach, and were bringing back to the ship. They volunteered the information that the deserters had gone off in a sailing canoe and were making for Tetiaroa, a group of small islands enclosed in a long reef some twenty miles north of Point Venus.

When Bligh received this news he summoned

the chiefs and told them that they must go to Tetiaroa and arrest the missing men. He declared that he expected this service as a proof of their friendship and added that unless they supported him he would "proceed with such violence as would make them repent it." A later entry in the log makes it clear that he intended to confine the chiefs on board if the men were not returned.

At first sight he seems to have been extremely unreasonable to forcing the Tahitians to go in chase of three men armed with fire-arms, when his duty surely was to detail a party from the ship. The explanation probably is that by sending the natives he hoped to avoid bloodshed and to make a quicker arrest. The sight of an armed party from the ship might have provoked the deserters to desperate measures, while the natives, as Bligh explained, could "collect round them as friends, and then seize on them and their Arms, & bind them with Cords and show no mercy to them if they made resistance." Moreover, he knew that the deserters could not remain long at large without the connivance of the natives, who would be less likely to harbour them if they knew that he would hold the chiefs responsible.

Hayward received a severe reprimand and was disgraced and turned before the mast. His conduct is an indication of the slackness of the officers' discipline and caused Bligh to record the following outburst in his log:

"Had the mate of the Watch been awake no trouble of this Kind would have happened. . . .

Such neglectful & worthless Petty Officers I believe never was in a Ship as are in this. No Orders for a few hours together are Obeyed by them, and their conduct in general is so bad, that no confidence or trust can be reposed in them, in short they have drove me to every thing but Corporal punishment and that must follow if they do not improve."

Squalls prevented the chiefs from approaching Tetiaroa for over a fortnight, and Bligh accepted the bad weather as an excuse. But on January 23 he received news that the deserters were back on the main island at a point five miles from the harbour, having apparently fled from Tetiaroa on the approach of a party of natives.

Bligh at once set off after them in person and as he approached the house in which they were hiding they came out and gave themselves up. He accounts for their docility by the fact that their ammunition had been spoiled by the wet.

Next morning he read the Articles of War to the ship's company and punished the deserters, Churchill receiving twelve lashes, Muspratt and Millward two dozen each. They were then put back in irons until a fortnight later, when they received the same number of lashes as the second part of their punishment and were returned to duty.

Before dismissing the officers after the first flogging Bligh delivered a harangue on their responsibilities, reminding them that an officer with men under his care was at all times in some degree responsible for their conduct.

That his strictures were necessary there can be no doubt, nor were the junior officers alone to blame. Only a few days previously Bligh had had the sail-room cleared, so that the sails might be taken on shore to air. He then found the new fore-topsail and foresail and several of the other sails were mildewed and rotten in many places. Now, sails to a ship are as important to her as limbs are to her officers, more especially when she is in a region where no fresh canvas is to be procured. The care and the airing of the sails in a damp and tropical climate were thus an essential duty and the responsibility for seeing that it was properly performed lay with the master and the boatswain. Bligh had twice ordered all the sails to be aired, but he now found that these new sails had never been taken out since the ship left England, although they had been reported to be in good order.

"To remedy the deffects," he wrote, "I attended and saw the Sails put into the Sea and hung on shore to day to be ready for repairing," and adds, not without justification, "If I had any Officers to supercede the Master and the Boatswain, or was capable of doing without them, considering them as common Seamen, they should no longer occupy their respective Stations. Scarce any neglect of duty can equal the criminality of this."

## § 4

By this time the novelty of the *Bounty* had worn off, and her deck was no longer so crowded, except when strangers from a distant part of the island came to visit her. But every evening an hour before sunset the beach off which the ship was lying became a parade, men, women, and children coming down to chat and gossip with the seamen, and to amuse themselves, until nearly dark, when they dispersed. The women would play a game with breadfruit, throwing it from one to another with their feet; the men would practise with their spears, while the boys walked on stilts or tried their skill in wrestling, and the little girls performed dances by themselves.

"At these times," wrote Bligh, "we see an Assembly of three or four hundred people, happily diverted and good humoured and Affectionate to one another without ever a Single circumstance happening to counteract it. These things I am a spectator at every fair Evening."

During some of the dances (*heiva*) the women went through what Bligh describes as "the most lascivious and wanton motions," but on all other occasions they guarded their persons with great decency. Nor, although free with their favours, were they immune from the jealous outlook of more confirmed monogamists. In what Bligh describes as "a laughable Scene," a girl who claimed one of the seamen as her husband gave another a beating for having allowed him to



enjoy her embraces, but the two became reconciled to each other a few minutes later.

Bligh did not relax his watch on the seamen's dealings with the Tahitians, and at the end of January he punished Isaac Martin with nineteen lashes for striking one of them who was suspected of having stolen an iron hoop. When logging the offence he mentions that he had first ordered two dozen lashes, but had reduced the sentence on the intervention of Tynah and his wife. "It was so violent a transgression among these friendly people, & so great a violation of my orders without any real cause, that nothing but the intercession of the chiefs cleared him."

For all their friendliness, however, it became clear that one of them at least had sinister intentions. On the morning of February 6 one of the ship's mooring cables was found to have been cut near the water's edge, and when hauled in was holding by a single strand. Bligh was wholly at a loss to account for this malicious act, which might have imperilled the safety of his ship. He threatened the chiefs with dire penalties unless they found the culprit, but never learnt the truth. Being finally convinced that Tynah had no share in the matter, he made no further trouble, but erected a stage across the fo'c'sle so that the cables were immediately under the eye of the sentry and mate of the watch.

It was as well for the culprit that he was not discovered, for in spite of Bligh's usual treatment of the natives, he could inflict terrible punishment when he considered the circumstances called

for stern measures. On March 2, during a very dark night, two natives crept up to the tent on the beach and stole an empty water cask, part of an azimuth compass, and the bedding out of the hammock of the gunner, who was on watch.

Bligh went ashore next morning and rated Christian and Peckover, who were in charge of the post ashore, for neglecting their duty. They pleaded that the night had been so dark and that it had been raining so heavily that they could neither hear nor see each other, much less the thieves. Bligh then publicly proclaimed that he would no longer be friends with Tynah unless the thieves were produced, and that they must be found during the day. Within three hours Tynah had arrested one man, who was not one of his own people, and handed him over to Bligh, saying, "There is the thief. Kill him." The cask and compass, damaged, were recovered, but the gunner's bedding could not be found, nor the man suspected of taking it.

Bligh took his prisoner on board and punished him, as he records in his own log, with "one hundred lashes, severely given" and then put him in irons. This was a most drastic punishment (although even so not the limit that might be given to a seaman), but Bligh states that the man bore his punishment surprisingly "and only twice asked me to forgive him, altho he expected to die. His back became very much swelled, but only the last stroke broke the Skin."

It is difficult to reconcile this severe sentence with Bligh's usual considerate treatment of the

islanders. But it must be remembered that he was very much at their mercy. From his point of view it was necessary to make an example, and, as he explained to the chiefs, he punished his own people for the most trifling offence against theirs, so that he must insist on a like punishment when their people were to blame. Tynah was so moved that he embraced Bligh on the spot and called him his friend, and he appears to have acquiesced, not only in the man's punishment, but in his being detained on board as a hostage for the good behaviour of his fellows.

Five nights later the prisoner succeeded in making his escape, and diving overboard swam to the shore. The officer of the watch heard the splash and put a boat off, but the man was never seen again. Bligh had given orders that the mate of the watch (in this instance the midshipman George Stewart) was to be responsible for the prisoners, and to visit them periodically. Once again he logged a complaint against his officers:

"I have such a neglectful set about me that I believe nothing but condign punishment can alter their conduct. Verbal orders in the course of a Month were so forgot that they would impudently assert no such thing or directions were given, and I have been at last under the necessity to trouble myself with writing what by decent Young Officers would be complied with as the common Rules of the Service."

## § 5

It does not appear to have occurred to Bligh that the length of his stay at Tahiti had something to do with the slackened discipline of the officers. He had reached the island at the end of October, and in the letter he sent to the Admiralty from the Cape he had promised to execute their Lordships' directions with the utmost despatch. It need not have taken him five months to collect the plants; indeed, they were ready long before he sailed. He himself gives no explanation of his long stay, and the probable reason was that he wished to wait until early April to take advantage of the fine season and the prevailing winds. Nevertheless, there can be no question that the long sojourn in that agreeable island, with light duty, provisions in plenty, and accommodating women, must have had an influence on the minds of the whole ship's company, weakened their discipline, and made them more prone to mutiny when the time came.

However, towards the middle of March Bligh began to make ready for sea. The ship's sides were caulked, the rigging refitted, and the cables hauled up and cleaned. The masts were scraped and greased, and the mast-heads and yard were tarred. The cooper put the water-casks in order. The sailmaker repaired the canvas awnings and looked to the sails. The carpenters made sweeps to row the ship out of the bay. Parties were sent to cut brooms, others to make trusses of the hay which had already been cut and dried. The

powder was sent on shore to air. A large stock of wood was put aboard, and the water casks were filled. The sails were got out and dried. The whole ship was cleaned and washed with boiling water to kill the cockroaches.

The most important task of all was the loading of the precious breadfruit plants. Bligh had made extra room for them by using the space where the hen-coops had been. The plants had to be sorted by size, so as to fit into the places allotted to them. By April 1 all that the ship could carry had been stowed on board: 1,015 plants, contained in 774 pots, 39 tubs, and 24 boxes, "a finer or healthier set was never seen."

The natives showed great distress when they saw that the *Bounty* was soon to sail. Each officer and seaman had his special friend or *tyo*, who brought what presents he thought would please most. Bligh received large supplies of plantains, breadfruit, coconuts, and pigs, and gave his last presents in return. "Indeed," he wrote, "there appears such a universal Kindness & Attention among these friendly people as exceeds any account I can give of them."

Tynah sent two Tahitian skirts (*pareus*) as a present to King George, and collected his priest and people to pray that the gift would please the King and that he would ever remain their friend.

The night before the ship sailed there was no laughter or dancing on the beach. The Tahitians were sorrowing at the departure of their friends, little knowing that it was not to be long before they would see some of them again.

Tynah and his wife slept the last night on board, and at dawn on April 4 Bligh weighed, and the boats towed the *Bounty* out of harbour, followed by hundreds of canoes. Tynah and his wife Iddeeah remained until the last moment and Bligh put them ashore when the ship was off Matavai. Before parting he gave Tynah a present of shirts, hatchets, saws, files, mirrors, nails, and fish-hooks, together with two muskets and a brace of pistols. His last act was to hand back Captain Cook's picture, which he had kept on board during the *Bounty's* stay, having written on the back of it the date of the ship's arrival and departure and the number of plants she had on board. Bligh writes tenderly of the parting with his friends, who when the time came begged him, like a pair of children, to stay one night longer. Finding that could not be, they took sorrowful and affectionate leave of him. Tynah asked that the *Bounty* might salute him with her guns. This request Bligh, ever putting duty before sentiment, felt he must refuse, for fear that the vibration might hurt the plants; but as Tynah and his wife left the ship Bligh called upon all hands to give him three cheers, which they did very heartily.

When the boat returned from the shore the *Bounty* bade farewell to Tahiti and a double ration of grog was issued to all hands. As Bligh wrote in his log: "The Success of the Voyage now only hinges on our passage home."

### III

#### THE MUTINY

##### § 1

PARTINGS are always harder for those who stay than for those who go, and it is likely that the Tahitians grieved for the men who sailed away in the *Bounty* more than her people grieved for the friends and sweethearts they had left behind. According to Morrison, the sailors were in high spirits as they took their last look at Tahiti in the setting sun. They began to talk of home, working out the probable length of the passage and counting up the pay they would receive. "One would readily have Imagined," says the journal, "that we had just left Jamaica instead of Taheite, so far onward did their flattering fancies waft them."

It may seem surprising that Bligh should have succeeded in sailing with his ship's company complete. But the men knew the temper of their commander. The severity with which he had dealt with the three runaways must have made a salutary impression upon their minds, and they must have felt that had any of them deserted before the ship sailed Bligh would have delayed his departure until he had taken them.

Bligh lost no time in showing them that he

expected an immediate return to the discipline of shipboard life. The morning after the *Bounty* had left Tahiti she anchored off Huhine, another of the Society Islands. Bligh mustered all hands for an inspection, and stopped the grog ration from most of them for not being clean and properly dressed.

He made some inquiries for Omai, a native whom Captain Cook had taken to England and brought back, but found that he was dead. He took on board some yams for the ship's use, and, having nothing further to detain him, sailed the same evening.

He had no reason to expect any new discovery, for his course was close to the track of former navigators, but on April 11 he found an uncharted island, Aitutaki, the most northerly of the Cook or Hervey group. Some natives came off in a canoe. Bligh gave them some trinkets and went through the ceremony of rubbing noses with the chief, and then continued his course towards the Friendly Islands.

During the passage began that series of clashes between Bligh and Fletcher Christian which was to have such momentous consequences to everyone on board.

It seems likely that the trouble between these two had started while the *Bounty* was still at Tahiti. From Bligh's log there is nothing to show that he was not on the best of terms with the young officer whom he had promoted to acting lieutenant, for he does not mention that he held Christian responsible for the thefts from the post



ashore, of which Christian was in charge. We know from Morrison that Bligh, when he first heard of the theft, upbraided Christian for neglect of duty, and in the circumstances it was not unnatural that he should have done so; yet he certainly logged no reprimand. But according to Edward Christian, Fletcher's brother, who was a professor of law at Cambridge, Bligh told one of the chiefs that Christian was nothing but his slave. This chief was Christian's special friend, and he went to Christian in some perplexity and reproached him with deceit, until Christian explained that he was no man's slave save in the sense that everyone in the ship, including Bligh, was the servant of King George.

This statement appears in a very rare pamphlet which gave an account of the proceedings of the court-martial of the mutineers, with an "Appendix" containing Edward Christian's defence of his brother. The source of the information is not mentioned; it may have come from Morrison, from whom the author stated that he had received letters, but although Edward Christian cannot be regarded as an impartial witness, his evidence, both here and later, cannot be neglected, and it is full of circumstantial details which have a ring of truth.

If the story was true, Christian may well have resented the insult most bitterly, knowing the Tahitians' respect for good birth and aristocracy and their contempt for slaves. Alone, the incident would not have been important. But there was more to come.

According to the journal of James Fryer, when the *Bounty* was approaching the Friendly Isles Bligh and Christian "had some words" in working the ship. Bligh rated Christian, who replied:

"Sir, your abuse is so bad that I cannot do my duty with any pleasure. I have been in hell for weeks with you."

Fryer mentions that "several other disagreeable words past, which had been frequently the case in the course of the voyage."

Three days after this the *Bounty* anchored off Nomuka, in the Friendly (or Tonga) group. Bligh went ashore and met the chiefs, whom he invited to dinner on board, and chose a suitable place for watering, while Nelson found some breadfruit plants which he needed to replace a few of those in the collection that were either dead or sickly.

Next morning Bligh sent Christian ashore with a watering party, while Elphinstone, the other master's mate, took the wooding party. They had strict injunctions against offending the natives. These people were, however, very different from the Tahitians. They tried to take the casks from the sailors, and if a musket was pointed at them they poised a spear threateningly in return.

Seeing that they could molest the sailors with impunity, the natives became even more impudent until Christian, finding it difficult to carry out his duty, informed Bligh, who (so Morrison tells us) damned him for a cowardly rascal and asked him

if he were afraid of a set of naked savages while he had arms in his hands.

"The arms are of no use," replied Christian, "while your orders prevent them from being used."

*Bligh's account of this incident is different.* He states that, although he gave orders for the men to be kept out of the natives' way, the officers allowed the natives to crowd round his party and talk to them, and in this way an axe and an adze were stolen. Bligh acquitted the men of neglect of duty, since they could not keep their tools in their hands and fill the casks at the same time. "As to the Officers," he says, "I have no resource, nor do I ever feel myself safe in the few instances I trust them."

On the next day the natives stole the grapnel from the boat that had taken the wooding and watering parties ashore. Fryer reported this to Bligh, who was furious, and said he would detain some of the chiefs who were on board until it was recovered. Fryer suggested that they had plenty of grapnels and therefore the loss was not very great.

"Not great, sir!" cried Bligh. "By God, if it is *not* great to you, it is *great* to me!"

He then weighed, keeping the chiefs on board, and, apparently with the idea of making a show of force, ordered the ship's company to stand to arms. Some of the seamen were awkward in handling their muskets, whereupon Bligh told them that they were all "a parcel of lubberly rascals" and said that he would be one of five

who would disarm the lot of them with good sticks. Then, pointing a pistol at one of the seamen, McKoy, he threatened to shoot him for not paying attention. When it became obvious that there was no chance of recovering the missing grapnel Bligh gave the chiefs a few presents and let them go, telling them that all English people were their friends, but that they always resented thieving, whereupon (as Bligh says) they embraced him with a flood of tears.

The ship sailed on towards the island of Tofua, in the north-west of the Friendly group, and next morning occurred a further altercation between Bligh and Christian which was the direct forerunner of the mutiny.

## § 2

Bligh makes no mention of this in his log. But Morrison, Fryer, and Edward Christian all give separate versions, each corroborating the other save for minor details.

A good supply of coconuts had been taken on board at Nomuka. Those which Bligh had bought for the ship had been piled up on deck between the guns. The private stores of the officers and men had been stowed in their own quarters.

On the morning after the ship had sailed Bligh came up on deck, took a look at his coconuts, and called for the master.

"Mr. Fryer," said he, "don't you think those coconuts are shrunk since last night?"

Fryer agreed that the piles were not so high as they had been when the ship sailed, but suggested that the crew might have pressed them closer in walking over them during the night.

Bligh declared that they had been stolen, and swore he would find out who had taken them, since the theft must have been committed with the knowledge of the officers. The officers were summoned, but all declared that they had not seen any of the seamen touch the nuts.

"Then you have taken them yourselves," stormed Bligh, and ordered Elphinstone to have every coconut in the ship brought up on deck.

Bligh then cross-examined each officer as to how many he had bought and how many he had eaten. When he came to Christian he asked him the same questions.

"I do not know, sir," was the reply; "but I hope you don't think me so mean as to be guilty of stealing yours."

"Yes, you damned hound, I do!" retorted Bligh. "Damn your blood, you must have stolen them from me or you could give me a better account of them!"

"Why do you treat me thus, Captain Bligh?" asked Christian, who appeared much hurt and agitated.

Bligh "shook his hand" in Christian's face and shouted, "No reply." Then he turned to the rest of the officers and cried: "God damn you, you scoundrels, you are all thieves alike, and combine with the men to rob me! There never were such a thieving sets of rascals in the world before! I

suppose you'll steal my yams next, but I'll sweat you for it, you rascals! I'll make half of you jump overboard before you get through Endeavour Straits!"

He then called Samuel, the clerk.

"Stop the villains' grog," he cried, "and give them but half a pound of yams to-morrow, and if they steal then, I'll reduce them to a quarter!"

It was not a pretty display of passion over a few coconuts which had been bought at the rate of twenty for a nail; and Bligh's words are not the embellishments of a novelist, but the utterances recorded by the writers referred to above, two of whom were eye-witnesses to the event.

It is possible that there was some truth in Bligh's accusation, for Edward Christian records his brother having replied to Bligh's question:

"I was dry. I thought it of no consequence. I took one only, and I am sure no one touched another."

To which Bligh answered:

"You lie, you scoundrel you have stolen one half!"

Even allowing for Bligh's anger at having his nuts stolen, and his exasperation at what he considered Christian's neglect of duty at Nomuka, his behaviour on this occasion was abominable. In those times the commanders of His Majesty's ships were not accustomed to be mealy-mouthed—nor are some of them to-day—but even then there were limits to quarterdeck abuse, and Bligh's accusations of theft, added to those of cowardice,

were more than the high-spirited Fletcher Christian could bear.

Bligh, in his *Remarks on Morrison's Journal*, admits to having been angry at the loss of the coconuts which he had intended to issue when the ship was clear of the land. He claimed that the officers had permitted the whole "within a score" to be taken away. "Here was a publick theft," he wrote; "a contumacy and direct disobedience of orders"; and since the particular offenders could not be found out, he ordered all the coconuts to be replaced. He neither mentions, nor denies, having directly accused Christian of the theft.

Edward Christian tells us that in the afternoon Bligh abused Fletcher a second time and adds that Purcell (who may have supplied the information) met him coming forward from Bligh with tears running down his cheeks in big drops. Purcell asked what was the matter.

"Can you ask me, and hear the treatment I receive?" replied Christian.

"Do I not receive as bad as you do?" said Purcell.

"If I should speak to him as you do," answered Christian, "he would probably break me, turn me before the mast, and perhaps flog me. If he did, it would be the deaths of us both, for I am sure I should take him in my arms and jump overboard with him."

"Never mind," said Purcell, "it is but for a short time longer."

"In going through the Endeavour Straits I am

sure this ship will be a hell," declared Christian.

Cole, the boatswain, also tried to console Christian, and told him to keep his heart up.

"To be counted a thief is more than I can bear," was the reply; and later he was heard to say, "I would rather die ten thousand deaths than bear this treatment. I always do my duty as an officer and a man ought to do, and yet I receive this scandalous usage."

Here, then, was a keen young officer reduced to a mood of self-pity and depression; humiliated before his brother officers and the whole ship's company; nursing a bitter grievance against his captain; dangerously near breaking point.

It may be that Bligh realized that danger and saw that he had gone too far. Or it may be that he just forgot his rage, as men of his temperament are wont to do, in which case his accusations are still less excusable. At all events, an hour after his second tirade he sent Christian an invitation to sup with him.

Christian excused himself, saying that he was unwell. "For which," wrote Bligh in his printed narrative, "I felt concerned, having no suspicions of his integrity and honour."

Christian was not alone in his mortification. Morrison mentions that after the first harangue the officers got together and were heard to murmur at such treatment, while the men grumbled that the yams would be the next things seized. Fryer says that after Christian had refused Bligh's invitation the others agreed to refuse also, should any of them be asked. But when it came



to the point and Bligh invited Hayward, he accepted, and was thereupon hissed by the rest.

This much detail is necessary to show, not only Christian's state of mind, but the attitude of the whole ship's company towards their commander on the night of April 27. Bligh had set both officers and men by the ears. They had been themselves abused, and they sympathized with Christian: he was popular with all ranks, and one of his comrades said, even after the court-martial, "I would still wade up to the armpits in blood for him."

An unhappy ship must be as near hell as any place on earth can be, and that night Bligh had made it so. The hearts of those under him were simmering. A day more, and they might have grown cool again. As it was, Fletcher Christian brought them to the boil.

### § 3

The important point to emphasize is that Christian's thoughts did not turn to mutiny forthwith. His mind was in torment, and in that exacerbated condition he felt that he could stand Bligh no longer. His first impulse was the instinct of the hunted: to get away.

According to Morrison, Christian told him (after the mutiny) that his first plan had been to leave the ship on the night of the coconut affair. He revealed this intention to Cole, Purcell, Stewart, and Hayward. It is significant

that these officers made no attempt to dissuade him. Nor did they report the matter to their commanding officer, as they might well have done for Christian's own good, if not from any feeling of duty. Instead, they gave him a quantity of nails, some beads (for trading with the natives), and some pieces of roast pork. Christian put these things into a bag which Hayward gave him and hid it in the hammock of Robert Tinkler, Fryer's young brother-in-law. Then, with some slaves and a stout plank he found on the starboard gangway, he improvised a raft on which he intended to escape.

History might have taken a different course had not the ship been astir during the first and middle watches and the men gazing at the volcano on the island of Tofua, off which the ship was lying. Finding that he could not get away without attracting attention, Christian went below to get some sleep.

Meanwhile Bligh had come up on deck between ten and eleven to give his final orders for the night, as his habit was. Fryer was in charge of the first watch. He tells us that at this time he was on speaking terms with Bligh (and adds, "But I am sorry to say that was but seldom") and he remarked:

"Sir, there is a breeze springing up fair and a young moon, which will be lucky for us when we come on the coast of New Holland."

"Yes, Mr. Fryer," agreed Bligh affably, "it will be very lucky for us to get on the coast with a good moon."

He then left his orders and went below, in complete ignorance that anything untoward was brewing in his ship.

Peckover, the gunner, relieved Fryer at midnight and took over the middle watch. Just before four o'clock one of the midshipmen, Stewart, went down to call Christian, who was officer of the morning watch, and found him (as Morrison put it) "much out of order." Stewart begged him not to desert the ship, saying, "The people are ripe for anything."

This, if we are to believe Christian's story, made a forcible impression on his mind. He went on deck, relieved the gunner and posted the watch. Hallett, a midshipman who was one of the mates of the watch, failed to put in an appearance. Christian did not send for him. The second mate of the watch was Hayward. Christian was so disgusted with him for accepting Bligh's invitation to supper that he refused to speak to him, and shortly after the watch had been set, Hayward found a convenient place on deck and went to sleep.

At that moment Christian must have seen his chance. Abandoning all thoughts of leaving the ship on his raft, he called Quintal and Martin aside (both seamen had been flogged by Bligh) and proposed to them that they should take the ship. They were for it. They then sounded Thompson and Churchill, the master-at-arms, who proved equally enthusiastic. Three other seamen, Smith, Williams, and McKoy, said that they were willing.

Having got seven men with him, Christian went to Coleman, the armourer, and asked for the keys of the arms-chest in the main hatchway, saying that he wanted a musket to shoot a shark which was following the ship.

Coleman handed over the keys without suspicion. On reaching the arms-chest Christian found Hallett asleep on it. He roused him and sent him on deck. Then he armed his party, and, says Morrison, "all the rest who stood in his way, without their knowing for what purpose." He posted Thompson as sentry over the chest, and left Burkett and Lamb (the butcher, who had been flogged for losing his cleaver) on guard at the hatchway.

In the meantime Hayward had woken up. Apparently he had noticed nothing amiss and was watching the shark when Christian and his party came up the fore-hatchway.

Christian, bidding Hayward and Hallett be silent (he does not seem to have thought it necessary to confine them), told off his men to their duties, some to stand guard over the master's cabin (which was opposite Bligh's), some to prevent the officers leaving their berths in the cockpit. Then, taking with him Churchill, Burkett, and Mills (the gunner's mate), he went below to arrest Bligh.

Bligh was in the habit of sleeping with his cabin door ajar, to be within call of the officer of the watch. His first intimation of the mutiny was the sight of Christian standing over him with a naked cutlass in his hand. He started up,

but Christian and his men seized him and tied his hands behind him, threatening him with instant death if he made a sound. Bligh, however (this is his own story), shouted lustily for help, but since the guards had been well posted, no one could go to his aid. He was forced up on deck in his shirt and made to stand abaft the mizzen-mast, closely guarded. When he demanded the reason for his treatment he received no answer but threats of death if he did not hold his tongue.

#### § 4

While Christian and his men were securing Bligh, two of the party, Quintal and Sumner, entered Fryer's cabin, saying, "Sir, you are a prisoner." Fryer began to expostulate, but they told him to hold his tongue or he was a dead man.

"But if you make yourself quiet, sir," said one, "there is no one on board will hurt a hair of your head."

Now, Fryer had a brace of pistols in his cabin, kept there by Bligh's orders after the desertion of the three men at Tahiti. Bligh suggests in his log that "a firm resolution might have made good Use of them," and adds that Fryer saw the mutineers in his cabin, for "our Eyes met each other through his Door Window." Bligh maintained that the pistols were loaded, but Fryer denied this, saying that the ammunition had been

taken when the men stood to arms at Nomuka and had not been returned. Shortly after Bligh had gone on deck Churchill entered Fryer's cabin and took the pistols.

Although Fryer was guarded he was not bound; nor were any of the other officers. Elphinstone, Nelson, Peckover, and Ledward, the surgeon, were kept in their cabins. So was Samuel but he got leave to go up to Bligh. But the carpenter and the boatswain were allowed to move freely about the ship, and the boatswain woke Morrison, who went on deck to see Christian standing guard over Bligh, "with a drawn Bayonet in his hand and his Eyes flaming with revenge."

Christian now ordered the boatswain to hoist out the small cutter, with a threat to look out for himself if he did not do it instantly. The boatswain told Morrison to lend a hand, which he did. Christian then directed the midshipmen, Hayward and Hallett, to get into the boat. With tears in their eyes they begged to be allowed to stay in the ship, but Christian ordered them to be silent.

Meanwhile Fryer had been begging his guards to let him go on deck, and finally Christian agreed.

Fryer went up and asked Christian to consider what he was about.

"Hold your tongue, sir," said Christian. "I have been in hell for weeks past. You know, Mr. Fryer, that Captain Bligh have brought this on himself."

"Mr. Bligh and you not agreeing does not say that you should take the ship from him. Put Mr. Bligh down in his cabin and I make no doubt but we shall all be friends again soon."

"Hold your tongue, sir," repeated Christian. "It is too late now."

"Mr. Christian," protested Fryer, "as you will not grant me what I first ask you, do for God's sake give Captain Bligh a better boat than the jolly boat, whose bottom is almost out, and let him have a chance of getting on shore."

"No, that boat is good enough," was the reply.

Fryer then whispered to Bligh to keep his heart up, and added, "If I stay in the ship I hope to follow you soon."

"By all means stay, Mr. Fryer," answered Bligh, telling him that Martin, one of the men under arms, was friendly and urging him to knock Christian down.

Fryer then made a move to speak to Martin, but Christian raised his bayonet, saying, "Sir, if you advance one inch further I will run you through," and ordered the guards to take him below.

On his way down he met Morrison and said:

"Morrison, I hope you have no hand in this business."

"No, sir," said Morrison, "I don't know a word about it."

"Hold yourself in readiness," whispered Fryer. "We may have an opportunity to recover ourselves."

"Sir, go down to your cabin," answered Morrison. "It is too late now."

Shortly after this, Fryer persuaded his guards to let him go to the cockpit, where the botanist and the gunner were confined.

"This is a very disagreeable circumstance," said Nelson.

"It is, Mr. Nelson," agreed Fryer.

"What is best to do in this case?" asked Peckover.

Fryer then told them that Bligh had agreed to his staying in the ship, and added, "If we are ordered into the boat, say that we'll stay with them, and if we stay I flatter myself that we shall recover the ship."

"If we stay," objected Peckover, "we shall all be thought pirates."

Fryer told them no; he would answer for that. But before they could make any further plans Fryer was ordered back to his cabin.

This is Fryer's account, written up long after the mutiny. Bligh does not corroborate it, except to say that he whispered to Fryer to knock Christian down. Whatever plans Fryer may have had for retaking the ship he did not put them into practice, and he afterwards told Bligh that he could find no one to act with. In any event, the time for action would have been before, not after, the loyal men had been put into the boat; and Christian refused to allow Fryer to remain on board.



## § 5

So much for Fryer's efforts on behalf of his captain. Morrison does not corroborate Fryer's statement, for, according to his journal, it was the boatswain and carpenter who asked Christian to let them have the launch before the master came up on deck. This is confirmed by Cole's and Purcell's evidence at the court-martial, when Purcell stated that he asked Christian "to let us have the launch and not make a sacrifice of us, as I had done nothing to be ashamed of, and would wish to see my native Country."

Christian then reluctantly ordered the launch out, not for Bligh's sake, but for those going in it. Indeed, it seems clear, from Hallett's evidence at the court-martial, that Christian's original intention was to send away only Bligh, Samuel, and the two midshipmen, but when Cole and Purcell told him they wished to go with Bligh, and asked for the launch, he agreed, saying that he did not wish to compel them or anyone else to stay in the ship against his will.

Morrison says that he promised Fryer that he would raise a party to try to rescue the ship. Millward (one of the first to join Christian) swore that he would stand by him, and went to speak to Muspratt, Burkett, and the boatswain. Then Churchill, seeing Fryer speaking to Morrison, asked Morrison what he had been saying. Morrison replied that he had been speaking about the launch, but Smith, who had been standing by, shouted:

"It's a damned lie, Charles, for I saw him and Millward shake hands when the master spoke to them."

Smith then called to the others to stand to their arms, which put them on their guard.

Morrison, seeing no one near him who seemed "inclined to make a push," helped get the launch out. When it was out "every one ran to get what he could into her and get in themselves as fast as possible."

Bligh tells us that the boatswain and seamen who were to go in the boat collected twine, canvas, sails, cordage, and 28 gallons of water. Samuel procured 150 lb. of biscuit, with a small quantity of rum and wine, also a quadrant and a compass, Bligh's journals, and some of the ship's papers, but Christian forbade him on pain of death to take the timekeeper or any of the charts. Bligh pays Samuel a handsome compliment for this—one of the few he is ever recorded paying anyone in the *Bounty*—and speaks of him having acted with great resolution, although carefully guarded and watched. When he tried to save a box which contained Bligh's surveys and drawings for the past fifteen years, he was hurried away with, "Damn your eyes, you are well off to get what you have." Bligh asked for arms, but the mutineers only laughed, and told him that "he was well acquainted where he was going and therefore did not want them." But Christian allowed Bligh's servant, John Smith, to bring up his trousers, which Smith helped him put on and laid his jacket over his shoulders.

Bligh describes how he did his best to bring the mutineers to their senses, as no doubt he did. The only man upon whom his words seem to have had any salutary effect was the man Isaac Martin, who gave him a shaddock to suck. Martin did actually get into the boat, but the mutineers ordered him out again.

The only others whom Bligh mentioned as having remained in the ship against their will were Coleman, the armourer, two carpenter's mates, McIntosh and Norman, and Michael Byrn, the half-blind fiddler. Bryn had made for the boat, but the mutineers had hauled him back, crying, "We must have our fiddler."

Bligh suggests that Purcell (who had been in his black books for months) was in sympathy with the mutineers, since he had seen him "acting the part of an Idler with an impudent and ill looking countenance," and says that Christian appeared to be in some doubt whether he should keep him in the ship or not. Finally, knowing Purcell to be a troublesome fellow, he decided to keep the two carpenter's mates: for carpenters he must have. Christian allowed Purcell to take his tool chest, but some of the mutineers objected, and one of them shouted out, "Damn my eyes, he will have a vessel built in a month," while another swore that Bligh would reach home if he had any tools with him. Eventually, however, Purcell got his chest over the side.

According to Morrison, while the officers and men were going into the boat Bligh made an appeal to Christian, saying:

"I'll pawn my honour, I'll give my bond, Mr. Christian, never to think of this if you'll desist. Think of my wife and family."

"If you had any honour," replied Christian, "things had not come to this; and if you had any regard for your wife and family, you should have thought on them before, and not behaved so much like a villain."

The boatswain tried to intervene, but Christian said, "It is too late. I have been in hell this fortnight past and am determined to bear it no longer. And you know, Mr. Cole, that I have been used like a dog all the voyage."

Then Bligh, seeing that the launch was already very low in the water, asked Christian to let the master and some of the loyal men stay in the ship.

"The men may stay, but the master must go with you," Christian told him.

Bligh then turned to the loyal men in the ship.

"Never fear, my lads, you can't all go with me. I'll do you justice if ever I reach England."

While Morrison was helping the boatswain to get his belongings into the boat he reminded him of Bligh's promise, and said that he intended to stay and take his chance in the ship.

"God bless you, my boy," said Cole. "Were it not for my wife and family I would stay myself."

The mutineers forced eighteen of the officers and men into the boat, Fryer among them. Bligh alone remained.

"Come, Captain Bligh," said Christian, "your

officers and men are now in the boat and you must go with them. If you attempt to make the least resistance you will instantly be put to death."

Bligh says that Christian seemed to be "plotting instant destruction on himself and every one, for all diabolical looking Men he exceeded every possible description," and this is his description of how Christian compelled him to leave the ship:

"Forcing me before him, holding by the Cord that strapped my hands behind my back and a Bayonet in his other, with a Tribe of Armed Ruffians about me, I was forced over the side where they untied my hands, and being in the Boat we were veered astern by a Rope."

Morrison tells us that Bligh, from the boat, begged Christian for a sextant. Christian took his own sextant which stood on the dripstone case and handed it into the boat saying:

"There, Captain Bligh, this is sufficient for every purpose, and you know this sextant to be a good one."

A few pieces of pork were then thrown into the boat, with some clothes and four cutlasses. While the boat was veered astern, the mutineers, according to Fryer, kept shouting, "Shoot the bugger!" and "Let the bugger see if he can live on three-quarters of a pound of yams!" The boatswain suggested to Bligh that they had better put off and take their chance, before the mutineers did them some mischief, and Bligh "very readily agreed."

Then, says Bligh, "After having undergone a great deal of ridicule we were at last cast adrift in the open Ocean. Having little or no wind we rowed pretty fast towards Tofoa, which bore N.E. about 10 leagues, and while the Ship was in sight she Steered to the W.N.W., but I consider that as a blind to me, for when we came away Huzza for Otahete was frequently heard among the Mutineers."

## § 6

I have dwelt at some length upon the narratives of the mutiny written by Bligh, Fryer, and Morrison because, although they tally in the general account of what happened, they vary in certain details; and in order to arrive at any conclusion as to what really happened, and what part each man played, it is necessary to have the story from as many angles as possible.

Each version must be accepted with some caution, for each narrator had a case to answer. Bligh had to answer for the loss of his ship. Fryer (as second in command) had to account for the fact that no serious effort was made to retake the ship or release her commander. Morrison had to explain why he chose to remain with the mutineers. So that none of the three accounts can be considered completely impartial, particularly where it directly concerns the writer, since no man could be expected to injure his own interests with so much at stake. Moreover, both

Morrison's and Fryer's journals were written up long after the event, although their accounts substantially agree with the evidence they gave on oath at the court-martial.

In discussing the cause of the mutiny Fryer expresses surprise that the mutineers should have been able to carry their scheme so far without discovery. As to the cause of the mutiny, he mentions that neither Christian nor any of the ship's company was specially attached to any of the Tahitian women except Stewart and Morrison, "who were the only two that had there particular Girls"; and he adds, "So I suppose from what they said they did not like their Captain."

Bligh would scarcely have been human had he ascribed the mutiny to anything he had done or said. Officially, and probably in his own mind, he had no doubt about the cause: the allurements of Tahiti, where the mutineers had "Ideally assured themselves of a more happy life among the Otaheitians than they could possibly have in England, which joined to some Female connections has most likely been the leading cause of the Whole business."

He observed that "the Secrecy of this Mutiny is beyond all Conception," and, like Fryer, expressed his surprise that no one with him in the boat had heard or seen anything suspicious. This may have been true, but if anyone had heard anything of Christian's plans on the previous night he was not likely to admit it afterwards to his captain.

Bligh, however, was convinced that the mutiny had long been planned. Casting back in his mind, he came to the conclusion that one of his own men and not a native had cut the ship's cable at Tahiti. "With such deep laid plans of Villainy and my mind free from any Suspicions," he wrote, "it is not wonderful that I have been got the better of."

It has always seemed curious to me that neither in his log nor at any time afterwards did Bligh comment on the behaviour of the officers who went with him in the boat. He was not usually backward in apportioning blame, and here, surely, he would have been justified. For although none had been bound, as he was, and although several of them were allowed to move about the ship for over two hours before they went into the boat, not one of them struck a blow in defence of his captain, his own safety, or his King's honour.

Morrison describes their behaviour as "dastardly beyond description." In his opinion an attempt to rescue the ship would have been successful, since some of those who were under arms "did not know what they were about." Martin, who at one time was armed, certainly tried to go in the boat, and Lamb, the butcher, whom Christian had put on guard at the hatchway, laid down his arms and went with the others.

According to Morrison, the officers' tame submission surprised Christian himself, who said that "something more than fear had possessed



them to suffer themselves to be sent away in such a manner without offering to make resistance." And as Muspratt, who was subsequently tried for his share in the mutiny, said in his written defence at the court-martial, "The great Misfortune attending this unhappy Business is that no one ever Attempted to rescue the Ship; it might have been done—Thompson was the only Centinel upon the Arm Chest."

It is certainly difficult to avoid the conviction that the officers were craven. Had Bligh been popular, it might have been otherwise. As to the origin of the mutiny, Cole and Purcell might have told Bligh what they knew, but apparently they did not. The reason is obvious, for it was their duty to have reported Christian's plans for deserting the ship.

If one can accept the accounts of how Bligh accused Christian of stealing the coconuts, the direct cause of the mutiny is clear enough: it was Christian's personal enmity to Bligh. But Christian certainly could not have done what he did had the *Bounty* been a happy ship or had the men who joined him so readily not known the allurements of Tahiti. So far Bligh was probably right; yet there seems little doubt that there was no premeditation, as he supposed, for, as I shall show hereafter, it was not one of his own men who cut the cable while the *Bounty* was still in port.

As I see it, the mutiny was caused by a clash of two irreconcilable temperaments; the clash of Bligh the Cornishman and Christian the man of

Cumberland with Manx blood in his veins. Under another captain Christian would never have become a mutineer, but might have advanced in his profession and served his King with distinction: his was not the stuff of which mutineers are made, and that is why his story is remembered.

Bligh, on his side, belonged to a school which believed that hard words broke no bones. He was isolated from the world; isolated even in his own ship. He was irascible by nature, and it may well be that the change from the easy life at Tahiti had had its effect on him too and made him more difficult than usual. His inability to control his tongue was certainly the bane of his career.

For Christian there can be no condonation: only pity. Bligh's abuse at its worst did not entitle him to take his ship. He had his remedy: to bring his captain before a court-martial when the ship reached England. Had Bligh possessed enough imagination to realize that abuse will leave one man unmoved but goad another to rebellion, or had Christian been better schooled to accept hard words, however unjustified, from his superior officer, Bligh would not have been steering an open boat for Tofua on the morning of April 28, 1789, and Christian would not have been in command of the *Bounty*.

## IV

### AT SEA IN THE "BOUNTY'S" LAUNCH

#### § 1

THE eighteen officers and men Bligh had with him in the open boat were:

The master . . .	John Fryer
The boatswain . . .	William Cole
The gunner . . .	William Peckover
The carpenter . . .	William Purcell
The acting surgeon . . .	Thomas Ledward
The master's mate . . .	William Elphinstone
Two midshipmen . . .	Thomas Hayward and John Hallett
The clerk . . .	John Samuel
Two quartermasters . . .	Peter Linkletter and John Norton
One quartermaster's mate . . .	George Simpson
The sailmaker . . .	Laurence Lebogue
The butcher . . .	Robert Lamb
The captain's servant . . .	John Smith
Two able seamen . . .	Thomas Hall (cook) and Robert Tinkler
The botanist . . .	David Nelson

As his men pulled away from the ship in the direction of Tofua, he had plenty of time to reflect on what he called "the vicisitudes of human affairs." A few hours before, he had had every prospect of a successful passage to the West Indies, every hope of accomplishing what he had been sent to do. His plants had been flourishing, his crew in perfect health, his ship well stored with water and supplies. And now he was in an open boat, 23 feet from stem to stern, and so overladen that her gunwale was but 8 inches above the water-line, and the nearest European settlements thousands of miles away. He had no map, nothing but an old book of nautical tables to guide him, and a supply of rations which normally would have lasted his company but a week.

Even so, he kept his heart high, not only at that moment, but in the terrible days that were to come. Martinet he may have been, but no one can doubt that William Bligh was a brave man.

His immediate plan was to refresh his people on the island of Tofua. Then he would make for Tongatabu, in the south of the Friendly group, where he would procure from the King (whom he had known on his previous voyage) a supply of food which would enable him to reach the East Indies. At no time does he appear to have contemplated remaining in one of the islands until a ship should call.

The launch did not reach Tofua until after sunset. The shores were so steep and rocky that

Bligh had to give up the idea of landing that night. He served out half a pint of grog to each man, and allowed them to take their rest as best they might, keeping the boat under the lee of the island with two oars.

Next morning they found a cove with a stony beach and anchored. Bligh sent Samuel with a party to look for supplies, but they returned with only a few quarts of water which they had found in hollows of the rocks, having seen no sign of a spring. Bligh, not knowing what the future might bring, issued only a morsel of biscuit and a glass of wine to each man for dinner.

Their efforts on the following day yielded them no more than a score of coconuts. Bligh called the island "as miserable a spot of land as could well be imagined," and much of it was covered with lava from the volcano which the crew had been watching on the night before the mutiny.

Some distance from the beach they found a cave, which offered a better refuge against surprise from hostile natives than the beach. Bligh occupied it with half the party so that Fryer and the remainder might have more room to sleep in the boat. For supper that night each person had a boiled banana and a quarter of a pint of grog.

So far they had met no natives, but on May 1 a party of about thirty appeared. They were friendly, and bartered some bananas, breadfruit, and coconuts for a few buttons and beads. They asked for nails, but Bligh prudently forbade any to be shown, since he knew they might be needed

in the boat. Bligh accounted for the presence of himself and his men by saying that his ship had been wrecked and sunk.

On the morning of May 3 he found that his companions were in better spirits than they had been since they had left the ship. The watering party returned with three gallons, and Bligh, seeing that the number of natives was increasing, and not caring for their looks, determined to sail that evening.

The chiefs appeared friendly, however, and Bligh gave them several presents, but two hundred of their people lined up on the beach, each with a stone in either hand. They began knocking the stones together: an ominous sound. Bligh had been writing up his log in the cave, and now sent it down to the boat. The natives attempted to seize it, and it was saved only by the timely intervention of the gunner.

Seeing the things being put in the boat, one of the chiefs asked Bligh to stay with them all night. He replied that he never slept out of his boat, but that he would trade with them again in the morning.

The chief said, "If you will not sleep ashore, we will kill you," and went away.

The knocking of the stones became louder, and every man knew it to be a sure sign that the natives were meditating an attack. Bligh and his party marched down the beach, everyone "in a Silent kind of horror."

He remained ashore until everyone was in the boat except one of the quartermasters, John

Norton, who was helping to shove off. As Bligh was climbing in, Norton left the boat's side and dashed up the beach to cast off the painter. The others yelled to him to come back. At that moment the attack began.

Stones began to fly like a shower of shot. Norton went down. Some of the natives seized the painter and began to pull the boat in—Bligh whipped out his knife and cut the rope, and they hauled off to the grapnel, but not before nearly everyone had been hit.

Seeing the boat escaping them, the natives filled their canoes with stones and put off to renew the attack which Bligh tells us they did "so effectually as nearly to disable all of us." To make matters worse the grapnel fouled but fortunately the fluke broke, and they hauled it up and got out their oars. The natives followed in their canoes and surrounded the boat, hurling their stones at the occupants, who could do nothing in defence but fling back the stones which lodged in the boat, and their aim was far less accurate than that of the islanders. In desperation Bligh flung overboard some clothes. The natives, like *Atalanta*, turned aside to pick them up, and the boat got away in the gathering dusk.

In the despatch Bligh sent to the Admiralty he declares that Norton was "killed instantly." This statement does not appear either in the log or the printed narrative. In the log Bligh says that while he was hauling off he saw five men struggling to get Norton's trousers, while two were beating him on the head with stones.

This looks as though Norton had been knocked senseless, not killed instantly. That is more likely, and how could Bligh have known whether he had been killed instantly or not? Yet, although this gallant man's one object had been to preserve them all, not one of his companions went to his assistance. They had no firearms, it is true, but they had four cutlasses and some spears which Bligh had bought. A resolute attempt might have saved him, for the natives' only weapons were stones, which, however, they threw with astonishing accuracy and force.

Norton was the fattest man in the *Bounty*. It is on record that Bligh afterwards told a relative that the man's death was fortunate for those in the boat. *Can it be that each man in the launch* felt a secret relief when he saw poor Norton go down, remembering how little food stood between them and starvation, and how close to the water the launch's gunwale was?

It is an ugly thought, and without further evidence it would be unfair to make a charge. But the fact remains that Norton's body was battered to death by the natives of Tofua while those for whom he had risked and given his life rowed away.

## § 2

Once clear of the canoes they stepped the foremast, set the sail, and stood away to the south. What now? That must have been the thought in every man's mind.



They held a council. One can picture that scene: the crowded boat, deep in the water even with her lighter load, beating up against the evening breeze, with Fryer at the helm; the anxious faces, many of them bloody from wounds, turned towards their captain; Bligh, in the stern-sheets, facing them, his habitually pale features more pallid still under the light of the young moon.

He gave them the facts. In the boat they had about 150 lb. of biscuit, 20 lb. of pork, 28 gallons of water, 3 bottles of wine, and 5 quarts of rum. They still had a few of the coconuts they had procured on the island, but the breadfruit had been trampled underfoot in the confusion of the attack. Timor, the nearest settlement in the East Indies, was a full 1,200 leagues away. Unless they went first to Tongatabu, there was no hope of getting fresh supplies until they reached the coast of New Holland. Which should it be, Tongatabu or Timor?

Fryer is for Timor. The natives at Tongatabu may play them some trick. Cole seconds him. He would rather trust to Providence and live on an ounce of bread a day than go to Tongatabu, where they might be robbed and cut to pieces. The others agree. "Let's make a fair wind of it," they cry.

Bligh warns them that the voyage will take six weeks. They must be ready to live on an ounce of bread and a quarter-pint of water a day. Then he says to the master:

"Well, Mr. Fryer, what shall we do?"

"Make a fair wind of it, sir, and trust to Providence."

Bligh asks each man in turn the same question: Will he live on an ounce of bread and a quarter-pint of water a day? Each man answers "Yes, sir"—with a great deal of cheerfulness.

Solemnly Bligh recommends the answer to their memory as a sacred promise.

"Shall I put the helm up, sir?" asks Fryer.

"Yes, in God's name!" cries Bligh.

He divides his company into two watches, has the boat set in order, and then says a prayer, as the launch bears away under a reefed lug-foresail for the coast of New Holland and the perilous Great Barrier Reef.

### § 3

That was on May 3. Between the 4th and 7th Bligh took the launch right through the Fiji Archipelago, and it is to his eternal credit as a navigator that, in spite of the appalling difficulties which faced him, he succeeded in charting the islands he passed.

In 1643 Tasman had discovered some of the north-eastern islands in the group, which he named Prince Wyllem's Eylanden, and in 1774 Cook had discovered the islet he called Turtle Island, in the south-east. But Bligh was the first European to sail through the archipelago and to ascertain its extent; and he was to consolidate his discoveries on returning from his second voyage to Tahiti with the *Providence* and

*Assistant.* On the chart he made he called the archipelago Bligh's Islands, as he had every right to do. As sometimes happens, the native name has persisted, but it is less than just to his memory that his own name has not been preserved in connection with his discovery. In ten thousand people who know the part Bligh played in the mutiny of the *Bounty*, scarcely one realizes that he put on the maps nearly forty islands, or more than six-sevenths of the whole of that important archipelago, and gave the first account of the natives.

These fertile islands must have been a tempting sight to the hungry men as they sailed past, but with the attack at Tofua fresh in his mind, Bligh would not land. It was probably well for those with him that he did not, for the Fijians were cannibals. On May 7 they were chased for some hours by two sailing canoes. Fryer mentions that Bligh, seeing one of the canoes coming up very fast, cried:

"Heave away, lads, if they come up with us they will cut us all to pieces."

"Damn my eyes, sir," said Laurence Lebogue, the old sailmaker, "you frighten us all out of our wits. Let the thieves come and be damned if they will, we will fight as long as we can." Then he muttered, "Very pretty, by God, that the captain is the first man frightened."

"You old scoundrel," said Fryer; "if you speak another word I will heave you overboard!"

Fryer's suggestion here is, unquestionably, that Bligh was unduly apprehensive. Actually, in

rowing away from the canoes, he was but playing the part of a prudent and wary commander. As he himself observes, it was a matter of doubt whether the natives had hostile intentions or not, and he admits that "we might have had great relief from them," but in the circumstances he judged it wiser not to take risks, and few will blame him.

On May 14 and 15 he passed the Banks group, the most northerly islands of the New Hebrides. These he took to be a new discovery, not knowing that Quiros and Torres had sighted them in 1606.

All this time the weather had been terrible: hard gales, continual rain, cold nights, high seas which broke over the stern and kept them bailing. After they had been at sea two days Bligh wrote:

"Our wants are now beginning to have a dreadful aspect which nothing but a firm and determined resolution can fight against, a situation peculiarly miserable on a Commander."

During the first stages of the voyage Bligh issued the rations by guesswork, but on May 9 he made a pair of scales from a couple of coconut shells. Some pistol balls had been found in the boat, twenty-four of which weighed 1 lb. He used one of these balls to weigh out the bread ration and gave each man  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of bread, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  pint of water at 8 a.m., at noon, and at sunset. Thus everyone had  $1\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of bread and  $\frac{3}{4}$  pint of water a day.

Heavy rain on the 7th enabled them to catch about 20 gallons, and they quenched their thirst for the first time; but they passed a miserable

night, wet and cold, even though Bligh served out a small ration of rum; and when day broke they had no relief from it but its light. They had no choice but to keep before the waves to save the boat from being swamped; but she performed well, and they made about 100 miles each day. Since there was no prospect of drying their clothes, Bligh bade everyone strip and wring them through the salt water, by which means all received warmth that, soaked with rain, they could not have. Even so, the cloudy, rainy weather was their salvation, for had the sun been shining they must have died of thirst.

By the 17th some of them began to beg for an extra allowance. Bligh refused it. Three days later he wrote:

"At Dawn of day some of my People half dead. Our appearances were horrible, and I could look no way but I caught the eye of some one. Extreme hunger is now evident, but thirst no one suffers from or have we an Inclination to drink, that desire being satisfied through our Skin. What little Sleep we get is in the midst of Water, and we wake with severe Cramps and Pains in the Bones."

On May 24—three weeks out from Tofua—he examined the biscuit, and found that he had enough, at his present rate of issue, for twenty-nine days. He expected to reach Timor in another month, but fearing that he might have to go on to Java, he determined to cut off the supper allowance, and so eke out the supply to last another forty-three days.

For sheer courage, that resolve would be hard to beat. Bligh himself feared that he would be opposed, for small as the allowance was that he intended to take away for their future good, he knew that to those starving wretches it would seem like robbing them of life. But when he explained the necessity, all agreed to accept the cut; and he promised to increase the ration as they got on.

Bligh tells us that he was in the habit of soaking his biscuit in his ration of water, in a coconut shell, and eating it with a spoon, taking care never to take more than a small piece at a time, so that he was as long at dinner as "at a more plentiful Meal."

They never succeeded in catching any fish, but that day they caught a seabird—a noddy—by hand. It was about the size of a small pigeon, and Bligh divided it into eighteen portions and distributed it by the sailor's method of "Who shall have this?"—one person turning his back and another holding up a share and asking the question, to which the first answered by naming someone, so that every man had an equal chance of the best share. The bird was eaten raw, claws, beak, feet, bones, and all, with salt water for sauce.

As they approached the Australian coast they caught a few more birds, which in some measure relieved their hunger, and the blood was given to those who were in most distress.

Then, at one o'clock on the morning of May 28, the man at the helm heard the sound of breakers,

and Bligh, lifting his head, saw them close under the launch's lee, not more than a quarter of a mile away.

## § 4

Bligh had set his course to strike the Australian coast to the south, rather than bear direct for Endeavour Straits, which divided the continent from New Guinea, feeling certain that he would find an opening in the Great Barrier Reef which fringes the shores of what is now Northern Queensland, and so get into smooth water and have a chance of obtaining fresh supplies.

Events justified his plan. By noon on May 28 he found a passage through the reef, and once in calm water, he and his people returned thanks to God for His protection, and "with much content," as Bligh says, took their meagre allowance of biscuit and water.

"With much content!" Even though past hardships must have been almost forgotten in the joy of their hard-won security, Bligh's inflexible resolution would not permit him to increase the allowance he had laid down.

Towards evening they landed on an island, where they found a few oysters upon the rocks, and Bligh divided his people into two parties, one to sleep ashore and the other in the boat.

One of the men had brought with him a piece of brimstone and a tinder-box, and with the aid of a small magnifying glass Bligh always carried

for reading the divisions of his sextant, they were able to make a fire next morning, and cooked a stew of biscuit and pork in a copper pot which someone had had the foresight to put into the boat. Each man received a pint, and while doling it out Bligh noticed "the voraciousness of some and the moderation of others." Fryer started grumbling because more water had not been added and, says Bligh, "showed a turbulent disposition until I enjoined him to be silent."

Careful as ever of his men, Bligh would not allow anyone to expose himself to the heat of the noonday sun, and after the meal each "took his allotment of Earth shaded by the Bushes or a tree for a short repose."

They called the island Restoration Island, since May 29 was the anniversary of the restoration of Charles II, and since it was here that they had been restored to fresh strength and courage.

On the following day Bligh found that "some inconsiderate persons" had pilfered the pork, which he had not been able to keep under lock and key as he did the biscuit: the carpenter's tool box having been used for that purpose. Everyone "most sacredly denied" the theft, but to put further temptation out of their way, Bligh decided to issue the 2 lb. that remained, so that with the oysters and their ration of biscuit, and plenty of water, they made the best meal they had had since leaving the ship.

Having rested his people and replenished his supplies with a store of oysters, Bligh decided to sail. As they were preparing to embark, a party



of natives appeared on the shore of the mainland and started calling to them. Bligh, however, determined to take no risks, and having got his men aboard put to sea.

On Sunday, May 31, he landed on another small island (which he called Sunday Island), and sent out two parties to search for supplies. While his companions had been in extremity he had had little or no trouble with them. They seem to have responded loyally to all the privations he called upon them to undergo. But as soon as their bellies were full again they began to grumble. He had had trouble on Restoration Island: some had complained that he was making too long a stay, others that they were too weak to go in search of provisions for the boat. And now some of "these unthankful people," as he calls them, declared that they would rather do without their dinner than go and look for it.

The ever-truculent Purcell seems to have been the ringleader, and, wrote Bligh, "told me with a mutinous look that he was as Good a Man as I was."

It was characteristic of Bligh that he did not hesitate an instant. Determined not to be made prisoner a second time, he seized a cutlass and told Purcell to take another and defend himself. Whereupon Purcell "began to make concessions." Fryer, instead of supporting his captain, called upon Cole to put Bligh under arrest, until Bligh told him that if he tried to interfere he would "put him to death the first person." This had a salutary effect on Fryer, who immediately

assured Bligh that he would support his orders in the future.

Thus peace was restored. But it was an incident which might have had sinister consequences had it not been for Bligh's prompt measures, and he determined never to have a cutlass out of his reach, since Providence seemed pleased to give him the strength to use one.

His resolution was again displayed on a later occasion, when he gave Robert Lamb what he describes as "a good beating" for wantonly disturbing some birds before the party which had been sent for supplies could catch any number. This punishment was deserved, for Lamb admitted that, when he had separated from his companions, he had eaten nine birds raw. Being the ship's butcher, he was doubtless used to a full belly, and it may have been he who stole the pork, although that was never proved.

After sailing along the coast for six days they again ventured into the open ocean, and passed through a new channel, to the north of Prince of Wales Island, out into the Arafura Sea, with the expectation of seeing Timor within ten days.

But as the days went by, the condition of those in the boat became worse and worse. Bligh tells us that extreme weakness, swelled legs, hollow and ghastly countenances, a great propensity to sleep, and an apparent debility of understanding, gave him melancholy proofs of their approaching dissolution.

Fortunately for them, Bligh kept his health, and he tells us that he felt no extreme hunger or

thirst, and so retained his strength to command. Nelson, Ledward—the surgeon—and the old sail-maker were the most distressed; he nursed them with care and tenderness, giving them a few teaspoonfuls of the wine which he had kept for what he calls "this dreadful stage." Not until he had been clear of the Reef for three days did he venture to restore the supper allowance, finding that he had enough for nineteen days.

At last, early on the morning of June 12, they sighted Timor "with an excess of joy," having run, by the log, 3,618 miles in forty-one days. They were weak, starved, ill; but they were alive. They had beaten the sea.

And Bligh had made them beat it. From his log we know that he was "constantly assailed" by demands for an increase in the ration which all had promised to accept. It was nothing but his refusal which saved them all. Fryer could have navigated the launch, but had Fryer, or any other of them, been in command, the food would probably have been gobbled up in a week. Only discipline, resolutely enforced, can keep men provident when they are stretched upon the rack of hunger.

Yet Fryer, in that part of his journal which deals with the launch's voyage, stated that Bligh constantly secured more than his share of the bread ration, and would secrete morsels of it while serving it out. Fryer quotes Purcell as his authority, and we know that Purcell had many grievances against Bligh. If the charge were true, how was it that Fryer never saw what was

going on? How could Bligh have palmed even one piece of biscuit before those jealously watching eyes? Had they seen him that would have been the end. Any fair-minded man will resent Fryer's insidious and uncorroborated accusations, made against a man he hated, with all the weak man's hatred of the strong, for it was only Bligh's scrupulosity and prudence which enabled Fryer and those with him to survive.

## § 5

Bligh was uncertain in what part of Timor the Dutch settlement was situated, but he steered along the southern coast of the island, anchoring next afternoon in a sandy bay, where he saw signs of life. Cole and Peckover went ashore, and soon returned with a Malay, who agreed to act as pilot. They took him aboard and sailed on; but anchored again at ten o'clock for fear of passing the town in the dark. For the first time Bligh issued a double allowance of biscuit and a little wine to each man. They weighed at one in the morning "after the most happy and sweetest Sleep that Men ever had," and half an hour before daybreak came in sight of the fort and town of Kupang.

Even then Bligh did not forget the requirements of official etiquette. The boatswain had brought with him a bundle of signal flags from which Bligh had made a small jack during the voyage. This he now hoisted in the main shrouds

as a signal of distress, not choosing, as he says, to land without leave.

Soon after daybreak a soldier hailed him and told him to land. He did so, alone, and was agreeably surprised to be greeted by an English sailor, who belonged to a ship lying in the roads. His captain, Spikerman by name, was the second person in the town, and Bligh asked to be taken to him, since he learnt that the Governor was ill.

Captain Spikerman received him with every kindness, and at once made arrangements to receive the launch's company in his own house. Bligh accordingly went back to the boat and called to his people to come ashore.

It is not likely that the watchers on the shore ever forgot that scene as those ragged and starving sailors landed from the boat which had brought them through a voyage that had made history. Even Bligh lets himself go in his log as he describes that moment, but with his seaman's particularity he does not omit to mention that, when at last they had dragged themselves to Captain Spikerman's house, they had a breakfast of bread-and-butter and tea. To some, that simple meal may seem an anticlimax to so perilous a voyage; but life is like that.

"Thus happily ended," wrote Bligh, "through the assistance of Divine Providence without accident a Voyage of the most extraordinary Nature that ever happened in the World, let it be taken in its extent, duration, and so much want of the Necessaries of Life."

The Governor, William Adriaan van Este, in

spite of his ill-health, gave Bligh every possible assistance. He hired a house for Bligh, put servants at his disposal, and promised to lodge his companions either in the hospital or in Captain Spikerman's ship. But when Bligh saw the size of the house he determined to lodge his people there "instead of letting them out of my sight," whereupon the Governor provided extra chairs and bedding.

They remained at Kupang recuperating for several weeks. Only Nelson, the botanist, failed to recover from the effects of the voyage, and he died of fever on July 20. He seems to have been the one man with whom Bligh was on consistently good terms throughout the voyage. The log shows that Bligh was genuinely affected by his death, and pays a generous tribute to his efficiency and devotion to duty.

Bligh was anxious not to miss the Dutch fleet which was due to sail for Europe in October before the break of the monsoon. Not caring to trust himself and his people again to the launch, he bought a schooner, which he called the *Resource*, for 1,000 rix-dollars—about £200.

Before leaving Kupang he sent a despatch to the Admiralty, dated August 18, giving an account of the mutiny and the open-boat voyage, in which he acknowledged his thanks to Mr. Wanjon, "the Second Governor," and to Mr. Max, the surgeon of the fort, who had shown the greatest possible attention to the sick. He also made out a "description of the pirates"—a detailed identification list of each man, giving age, height, ap-

pearance, and physical peculiarities. One copy he gave to the Governor, with an application, in the King's name, that instructions might be sent to all Dutch settlements to arrest the ship if she put in an appearance. A second list went to Lord Cornwallis, Governor-General of India. At the Cape of Good Hope he despatched a third list to Governor Phillip at the new settlement of Port Jackson in New South Wales.

The schooner sailed on August 20, taking the launch in tow. At Kupang Bligh had had fresh trouble with Fryer and Purcell, and at Sourabaya, where the *Resource* put in on September 12, matters came to a head. Led by Fryer and Purcell, various members of the schooner's company, including Ledward, Cole, and Hallett, made complaints against Bligh, saying that they had been used "damned ill." Bligh promptly put Fryer and Purcell under arrest, and requested the Governor to hold an immediate inquiry. The complaints against Bligh fizzled out. Fryer ate humble pie, and at his earnest supplication Bligh released him from arrest, but refused to have either him or Purcell back on board, and sent them to Batavia in native *prahus* which the Governor provided to escort the *Resource* as a guard against the pirates which infested the Archipelago at that time.

The schooner reached Batavia on October 2. There Bligh sold her for 295 rix-dollars. He was also compelled to sell the launch, with great regret, as he records, since it was impossible to take her back to England.

Batavia in those days was one of the unhealthiest places in the Far East. Bligh himself went down with a malignant fever soon after his arrival and nearly died, but recovered sufficiently to sail in the *Vlydt* packet on October 16, taking with him Samuel and John Smith, his servant.

Fryer was left in charge of the remaining officers and men, with written orders to see that they followed by the earliest ship. Bligh handed him the proceeds of the sale of the schooner, told him to give a month's pay to everyone except himself and the surgeon; he was to see that the money was laid out on warm clothing "to pass the Cape with." Thus was Bligh attentive to his men's welfare to the last.

He reached Portsmouth on March 14, 1790, but all his companions were not destined to follow him. Thomas Hall, seaman, had died at Batavia before Bligh sailed; Elphinstone and Linkletter, the second quartermaster, died a fortnight after his departure; Lamb died on the passage home, and Ledward, the surgeon, went down in a Dutch ship, the *Welfare*, which was lost with all hands. Thus, of the eighteen officers and men who had gone into the launch with Bligh, only twelve reached their native land.

## § 6

On October 22, 1790, Bligh and the survivors appeared before a court-martial which assembled to inquire into the loss of the *Bounty*. It was held



on board H.M.S. *Royal Sovereign* at Spithead. The President was the Hon. Samuel Barrington, Admiral of the Blue, and the members of the court consisted of three vice-admirals, six rear-admirals, and three captains.

The proceedings were brief and formal. A copy of Bligh's despatch from Kupang was put in and read. Fryer deposed that he had known nothing of the mutiny before it broke out. The court asked him, "After the mutiny did break out, did Captain Bligh and the rest of you use your best endeavours to recover her?" Fryer declared that he had done everything in his power. Hayward and Hallett gave similar evidence.

The court then asked Bligh if he had any complaints against any of the officers and men present. He replied that he had none, except the charge he had made against the carpenter.

The officers and men were in turn asked if they had any complaint against Bligh. All answered "None."

The court then found that the *Bounty* had been forcibly taken from Bligh by Fletcher Christian and "certain other mutineers," and adjudged Bligh and those present with him to be honourably acquitted.

Bligh's case against Purcell was heard the same day before the same court. The charge was insolence and disobedience on various occasions. The court found the charges proved in part and Purcell was reprimanded.

It is curious that Fryer, whose journal bristles with accusations and innuendoes against Bligh,

should have said not a word when he had the chance. But it is even stranger that Bligh, usually not one to suffer the slightest dereliction of duty, should have said not one word against Fryer or any of the others who, as he must have known, had not lifted a finger to rescue either him or the ship. Stranger still, not one of that imposing array of admirals and captains asked a single question as to what indeed were those "best endeavours" which the witnesses swore they had used to recover the ship.

Shortly after the mutiny Bligh was promoted to the rank of captain, and the following year was sent out on a second expedition to collect breadfruit plants, this time with two ships, the *Providence* and the *Assistant*. He performed his mission with such success that he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society for his services to navigation and to botany. The mutiny has dogged his footsteps through history, and while many relate his shame, few remember his glory, when, after the Battle of Copenhagen, Nelson called him on board the *Elephant* to thank him for the way he had fought his ship: the highest honour to which a seaman can attain.

# V

## THE MUTINEERS

### § 1

WHEN Bligh and his companions had been put into the launch the following officers and men remained with Christian in the ship:

One acting master's mate . . . . .	George Stewart	
Two acting midshipmen . . . . .	Peter Heywood and Edward Young	
The master-at-arms	Charles Churchill	
The armourer . . . .	Joseph Coleman	
The boatswain's mate	James Morrison	
The gunner's mate . .	John Mills	
Two carpenter's mates . . . . .	Charles Norman and Thomas McIntosh	
The botanist's assistant . . . . .	William Brown	

Fourteen able seamen: Thomas Burkett, John Sumner, John Williams, Mathew Thompson, Thomas Ellison, William McKoy, John Millward, Richard Skinner (ship's barber and master's servant), Mathew Quintal, Michael Byrn (fiddler and boatkeeper), Henry Hillbrant (cooper), Isaac Martin, Alexander Smith, William Muspratt (tailor and commander's steward).

Bligh afterwards declared that these were the most able men in the ship. Not all of them were mutineers. Christian had kept Norman and McIntosh because he needed carpenters. Coleman, the armourer, was also detained on account of his technical knowledge. Morrison himself declares that he had no hand in the mutiny, though he was hard put to it to prove his innocence later. Byrn was kept on board because the mutineers wanted a fiddler. Brown, the gardener, is not mentioned as having taken any open part in the mutiny, but seems to have stayed on board of his own free will. Martin, although under arms at first, was certainly lukewarm, and did make an attempt to go with Bligh. The remainder of the seamen were certainly implicated.

Young is the mystery man of the mutiny. In none of the records, nor in the evidence given at the court-martial, is there any reference to him. On the other hand, there is nothing to show that he made any attempt to go in the boat with Bligh, and he seems to have been content to throw in his lot with Christian. Bligh certainly considered him one of the mutineers, and mentions him in his log as "a worthless wretch."

Stewart was not active once the mutiny had begun, but if we are to believe Morrison, he first put the idea of seizing the ship into Christian's mind. Years afterwards Alexander Smith told the same story to Captain Beechey, of H.M.S. *Blossom*: that Christian's first thought had been to desert, and that Stewart had suggested that he would do better to take the ship, rather than

trust himself to the raft. It is only fair to Stewart's memory to say that when Captain Beechey asked Heywood for his comments on Smith's statement, Heywood (then a captain) replied, in a letter dated April 5, 1830, that the story was "entirely at variance" with Stewart's character and conduct. Captain Heywood added that Christian had told him that the idea of taking the ship had never entered his mind until he relieved the deck and found both the midshipmen of the watch asleep. The fact remains, however, that both Morrison and Smith told the same story; neither had anything to gain by it, neither had anything against Stewart, and—most significant of all—neither knew of the other's statement.

There seems no doubt, however, that both Stewart and Heywood were kept below in their berths until the launch had left the ship; so much is plain from Morrison's journal and Heywood's own statements. The reason is obvious: the mutineers needed officers, particularly navigators, and Stewart was the best practical navigator on board; even had Christian been disposed to let them go, the mutineers would have detained them, for they would have been lost had anything happened to Christian.

## § 2

When Bligh had his last sight of the *Bounty* she was steering W.N.W., but at nine o'clock, an hour after the launch had left the ship, a breeze

sprang up. The sails were trimmed, and Christian held a council, asking his men the same question Bligh was to ask his a few days later, off Tofua: Where shall we make for?

Most of them clamoured for Tahiti, but Christian proposed a more prudent course. He pointed out that if the launch made port Bligh and those with him would reach home. Sooner or later a ship would be sent to search for the *Bounty*. Where would she look first? Where but Tahiti? Tahiti was the centre of the Pacific. The authorities would know it to be the most likely place to which the mutineers would go. Any ship which came to look for them would be certain to call there for news. And if she found them there, that would be the end.

Where, then, should they go, someone asked him?

He suggested the island of Tubuai, in the Austral group. It was 500 miles south of Tahiti, 1,500 east-south-east of where they lay. It was well out of the track of ships, although Captain Cook had put it on the charts. It was inhabited, and so long as the people were not unfriendly they might live there at ease and in security. At least let them look at the island on their way. If it proved favourable then they could go on to Tahiti, collect any extra stores they needed, and return.

To this they agreed, and the course of the ship was altered to south-east. Christian then divided his men into two watches, keeping one himself and appointing Stewart to take charge of the other.

Morrison was told off to take over the stores and act as boatswain, McIntosh was made carpenter, and Mills gunner.

Christian then ordered the breadfruit plants to be thrown overboard to clear the cabin. Poor Bligh—one can imagine even that unsentimental heart being wrung had he seen those precious plants, on which he had spent such care and thought, bobbing along in the *Bounty's* wake. And doubtless his language would have reached its high-water mark of profanity had he known that Christian took possession of his cabin as soon as he had left the ship.

Morrison tells us that a few days later he formed a plan for retaking the ship and got several who "were not at all pleased with their situation" to agree, although the only name he mentions is that of Coleman. His idea was to wait until they reached Tahiti, and then get rid of the mutineers by putting them ashore, thinking that the design "might be favoured by an extra allowance of grog."

In spite of his precautions to ensure secrecy, however, he was soon discomfited to find that Christian knew of his plan. One of the mutineers had overheard the arrangements being discussed, but since Christian could not tell how many were implicated, he took no direct action, except to threaten Coleman that he would leave him at Tubuai until the ship returned from Tahiti. He also had the arms-chest moved into the main cabin. He took the keys from Coleman (who kept them as armourer) and gave them to Chur-

chill, ordering him to make his bed on the chest. The mutineers now went about armed with a brace of pistols, and Christian himself always had one in his pocket. A sharp watch was kept on the men who had been detained, and whenever a mutineer saw two of them in conversation he took care to make a third.

During the passage Christian had some of the old studding sails cut up to make uniforms for all hands, using his own for edging. He told his people that nothing had more effect on the natives' minds than a uniformity of dress, since it betokened discipline.

They made Tubuai on May 29. Christian sent Stewart off in the cutter to find the opening in the reef described by Captain Cook. As Stewart approached the shore he was attacked by some natives in a canoe, who stole a jacket from the boat, but were frightened off by the report of a pistol.

This was an ominous beginning, but once the cutter had marked the passage the *Bounty* passed through the reef and came to anchor. Next morning the natives assembled on the beach in large numbers. They flocked round the ship in their canoes, blowing their conch shells, but refusing to go aboard. Finally some of them did prove more amenable, but as soon as they were in the ship, they began to seize everything they could lay their hands on, and when Christian landed with a party they began to throw stones, but made off when the seamen fired a volley.

Although Christian did his best to make



friends with them by leaving hatchets in their deserted houses, they proved very shy, and did not respond to his overtures. Nevertheless, he determined to persist in his scheme of forming a settlement on the island. It was under twenty miles in circumference, so that the natives could not be numerous, and he had no doubt that they would become more friendly in time. And although there were no pigs, goats, and poultry to be had—no European navigator having ever landed and left any domestic animals according to the usual custom—that defect could be remedied by a visit to Tahiti, whither he determined to sail.

### § 3

On the passage to Tahiti Christian gave strict orders that no one was to mention the name of the island on which they had determined to settle, and he threatened to shoot anyone who should try to desert. He distributed the ship's trade amongst all hands, and then divided into lots the clothes and other effects of the officers and men who had gone in the launch. These were then drawn for by tickets, but Morrison observes that Christian's party were always "better served" than those who were thought to be disaffected.

The *Bounty* reached Matavai Bay on June 6. The natives flocked on board. There was a great reunion of old friends and parted sweethearts. It was inevitable that they should ask embarrassing questions: where the others were, and what

had become of the plants. But Christian had his answers ready. They had fallen in with Captain Cook, he told the chiefs, and Cook had taken Bligh and the others on board his ship, with the plants and the launch, and had sent the *Bounty* back for supplies to stock a settlement he was forming in New Holland.

The gentle islanders suspected nothing, and vied with one another to fulfil the wishes of their beloved Toote, little knowing that Cook was dead; for Bligh had thought it prudent to forbid his people to say anything of Cook's murder in Hawaii. "Nor do I think they would have thought any worse of us," wrote Morrison, "had they known the truth of the Story or been in anyway shy of supplying us, as Mr. Christian was beloved by the whole of them, but on the Contrary none liked Mr. Bligh tho' they flattered him for his Riches, which is the Case among polished Nations, those in power being always Courted."

By June 16 they had collected 460 pigs, 50 goats, a number of fowls, and several dogs and cats, mostly in exchange for iron tools. The bull and cow which Cook had left on the island they let go for a few red feathers, never having set much store on them.

When the *Bounty* sailed she had on board nine Tahitian men, eight boys, ten women, and one little girl. Some of these people had stowed away (doubtless with the connivance of the seamen) and did not appear until it was too late for Christian to put them ashore. Among them was Hiti-

hiti, who had formerly served with Cook and hoped to see him again.

Christian revealed the truth to them, and told them that they could never return to Tahiti. "At which," says Morrison, "they seemed perfectly easy and satisfied, never betraying the least sign of Sorrow for leaving their friends," and apparently bearing Christian no ill will for his deception.

The *Bounty* had a rough passage and the bull died as a result of several falls, but she reached Tubuai without any other mishap on June 23, and came to anchor in the harbour which the mutineers had called Bloody Bay.

The natives now appeared perfectly friendly, coming off to the ship without any signs of hostility and fraternizing with the Tahitians, who acted as interpreters. Christian had the live stock landed, and set about prospecting for a site for a fort.

One of the chiefs gave him permission to build on a piece of land four miles east of the opening in the reef, and he warped the ship up to it. Hard work lay ahead of them all, and he determined to stand no nonsense from his men. He began by teaching a lesson to Sumner and Quintal, who went ashore without leave, and did not return until the following morning. In answer to his questions they replied:

"The ship is moored and we are now our own masters."

Christian promptly clapped his pistol to the head of one of them, saying, "I'll let you know

who is master," and put them in irons.

Seeing that he was not to be trifled with, they begged his pardon next day, and he released them, and gave an order that two men might sleep ashore every night and as many as pleased might go ashore every Sunday.

He then made regulations for the daily work. Brown and one of the Tahitians were told off to clear a piece of ground and plant yams. Coleman and McKoy were put in charge of the forge, to make spades and hoes. Hillbrant was appointed cook. Byrn, Ellison, and some of the native boys were given charge of the boats. The remainder he sent ashore to work on clearing the ground for the fort, a sentry being posted to keep guard over the arms.

Once the ground was cleared Christian marked out the fort. It was to be 100 yards square, with walls 18 feet thick at the base and 12 feet thick at the top, surrounded by a deep fosse 18 feet wide, with a drawbridge on the side facing the sea. At each corner of the fort he mounted one of the ship's four-pounders.

It was an ambitious plan, but at first everyone set to with a will, unaccustomed as they were to the work. Some cut stakes, others made battens, some built up the walls, others dug the fosse. The carpenters made barrows and cut timber for the gates and drawbridge. Christian worked as hard as anyone and served half a pint of porter a day as an extra ration. So, Morrison tells us, "the work began to rise apace."

By September 1 the gateposts were up and the

walls nearly finished; but they were having constant trouble with the islanders, and skirmishes were continually taking place. The angry seamen would raid the gardens of the natives, who retaliated by throwing spears and stones.

The mutineers' chief grievance was that, although the natives showed no particular objection to their going to the women's houses, they refused to allow them to be taken off to the ship. A deputation approached Christian and asked that he would allow them to bring the women aboard by force. Christian refused, saying that it was better to use persuasive methods.

The mutineers then struck work, declining to do another stroke until each man had a wife of his own. They remained idle for three days, then demanded more grog; and, finding Christian adamant, broke open the spirit room and helped themselves.

Meanwhile Morrison, Heywood, and Stewart formed a plan for escape. Christian had been talking of taking the masts out of the *Bounty* and dismantling her; once the masts were out Morrison knew that he could prevent any chance of their being stepped again by destroying the purchase blocks and falls. He suggested that, having removed the danger of pursuit, they should take the large cutter and escape to Tahiti.

Before anything could be done, however, the situation between Christian and the men came to a head. He tried to pacify them by giving an extra allowance of grog every day, but they persisted in their demands for the women. Seeing

that he would soon have no hold over them at all, on September 10 he called all hands aft and asked them what they wanted to do.

Let him take them back to Tahiti, said the ringleaders; to Tahiti, where they could get women without force.

"Gentlemen," said Christian, "I will carry you and land you wherever you please. I desire no one to stay with me against his will. I have but one favour to ask: that you will grant me the ship, tie the fore-sail, give me a few gallons of water, and leave me to run before the wind, and I shall land upon the first island she drives to. I have done such an act that I cannot stay at Tahiti. I will never live where I may be carried home to be a disgrace to my family."

"There are some of us who will never leave you," cried Young; and others shouted, "Aye, aye, sir, we will stay by you, go where you will."

Christian called for a show of hands. Sixteen went up for Tahiti, eight for staying in the ship.

So it was agreed. When they reached Tahiti those who wished to remain ashore were to have their share of arms, ammunition, and stores. The *Bounty* was to be left in charge of Christian in a proper condition to go to sea, with her sails, tackle, and furniture.

The matter settled, they prepared for sea. But while a party was rounding up the live stock they were attacked by a force of 700 natives. A fierce fight ensued, during which Burkett received a spear-wound in the side and many of the natives were killed. Next day a young chief

named Taroa-meiva, who had been friendly with Christian, came aboard with two of his friends, and said that his own people were so enraged with them that if they stayed on shore they would be killed. Christian told him that he was sailing for Tahiti. Taroa-meiva then begged that he and his companions might be allowed to go with him, and Christian agreed.

They sailed on September 17, and after a fine passage dropped anchor in Matavai Bay on the 22nd. The natives were delighted to see them back again, and the men who were going to stay ashore began to land their chests and hammocks at once, for Christian warned them that he intended to sail in a day or two, as soon as he had filled up with water. Then, he told them, he meant to cruise the Pacific until he found an uninhabited island, where he hoped to live the remainder of his days without seeing a European but those who were already with him.

The eight men who had chosen to stay with Christian were all able seamen, with the exception of Young and Brown, the gardener:

Edward Young.

John Mills.

Isaac Martin.

William McKoy.

John Williams.

Mathew Quintal.

Alexander Smith.

William Brown.

The sixteen who had voted for Tahiti were:

George Stewart.

Peter Heywood.

Charles Churchill.

John Millward.

James Morrison.	Mathew Thompson.
Joseph Coleman.	Thomas Ellison.
Charles Norman.	Thomas Burkett.
Thomas McIntosh.	John Sumner.
William Muspratt.	Michael Byrn.
Richard Skinner.	Henry Hillbrant.

Of these Stewart, Heywood, Norman, McIntosh, Coleman, Morrison, and Byrn had taken no active part in the mutiny, and so had every desire to get home. By staying in the island they hoped that sooner or later they would be picked up by a passing ship. The position of the remainder was very different. For them, as Christian had warned them, the coming of a British man-o'-war meant death. The thought does not seem to have troubled them. They lived for the present. Tahiti meant women and easy living. The future could take care of itself.

So it was in high spirits that they took over their share of the ship's stores: a pig of iron for an anvil, a grindstone, some bar iron, some iron pots and a copper kettle, the carpenter's tools, part of the armourer's, and three gallons of wine for each man. They asked for two saws, but Christian said he needed them himself, and gave them some trade articles instead, also two telescopes and an old azimuth compass. The sails and canvas which Christian thought he would not need were also divided, and each man except the blind fiddler took a musket, a pistol, a cutlass, a bayonet, a cartridge box, 17 lb. of powder, some



lead for making musket balls, and a few spare belts.

Night had fallen by the time everything was landed. Those who were staying in the island slept ashore, and at daybreak were astonished to see the *Bounty* under way, standing out of the bay towards the north.

Fletcher Christian had taken no chances of being surprised by those ashore; nor did he intend to give those with him time to change their minds. So he had weighed anchor during the night, and at dawn on September 28, 1789, he and his fellow-mutineers sailed away from Tahiti, each to his peculiar fate.

#### § 4

Those who remained behind took up their abode with their former friends. Stewart went back to live with his Tahitian girl, whom he called Peggy; Heywood went with him. Morrison and Millward went to the chief Poeno, in whose home they were treated, Morrison tells us, like the rest of the family "but with more attention and respect." The others settled down with various Tahitian friends, some alone, some in pairs.

A proof of the strong attachment which each native had for his *tyo*, or special friend, was revealed when a Tahitian named Wytooa told Morrison that it was he who had cut the *Bounty's* cable because he had been furious with Bligh for

putting his *tyo*, Hayward, in irons after the deserters had escaped in the cutter. Wytooa declared that he would have killed Bligh had Hayward been flogged, and said that he had taken up his position behind Bligh, armed with a club, on the day the deserters were punished. He had hoped that when the cable was free the ship would be wrecked, so that the ship's company would have had to live ashore, when Hayward would have been out of Bligh's power.

Morrison also learnt that while the *Bounty* had been at Tubuai another ship had called at Tahiti, and that her captain had put ashore one of his seamen. This man, Brown (*alias* Bound), told Morrison that he was from the brig *Mercury*, Captain T. H. Cox, of London, and declared that he had remained in the island at his own request, having quarrelled with some of his shipmates and cut one of them across the face with a knife.

According to Brown's own account (as succinctly related by Morrison) he had been a sergeant in the Portsmouth division of Marines, but "being broke" (that is, dismissed the service) he had shipped in the *Eurydice* frigate to India, where he had entered the service of Hyder Ali as an officer, on turning Mohammedan. Tiring of this, he had deserted and made his way to Fort St. George, where with some others of his own kidney he had seized a small vessel belonging to the East India Company and looted her cargo. He had been arrested and tried, and although he had escaped conviction through lack of evidence, he had been sent back to England. He

had soon found the country too hot for him, and after a voyage in H.M.S. *Pomona* he had left her and joined the *Mercury*.

Morrison remarks that this story was enough "to put us on our Guard against one who appeared to be a dangerous kind of man; however, we each gave him some addition to his Stock of Cloaths." Later, Poeno produced a letter, signed T. H. Cox, wherein the vessel was called "His Swedish Majesty's Armed Brig *Gustavus III*," bound to the Sandwich Isles and China. In this letter Captain Cox described Brown as "an Ingenious handy Man when sober, but when Drunk a dangerous fellow." He was certainly to prove dangerous to the mutineers.

## § 5

After they had been a month in the island Morrison conceived the idea of building a schooner in which he and his friends might reach Batavia and thence England. McIntosh, Norman, Millward, and Muspratt agreed to come in with him, and to avoid arousing suspicion they decided to say that the vessel was "only for the purpose of Pleasuring about the Island."

When this proposal was given out, most of the others joined them. They built some houses on Point Venus and erected a flagstaff "to hoist the collours on Sundays," when Morrison read Divine service, which many of the natives attended.

Morrison tells us that the Tahitians "always behooved with much decency when present at our worship, tho they could not understand one word. . . . Those who were constantly about us knew when our Sunday came, and were always prepared accordingly. Seeing that we rested on that day they did so likewise and never made any diversions on it. One of them was always ready to hoist the Ensign on Sunday Morning, and if a stranger happened to pass, and enquire the meaning, they were told that it was Mahana 'Atooa (God's Day), and tho' they were intent on their Journey, would stop and see our manner of keeping it, and would proceed next day, well pleased with their Information."

Morrison and his friends set to work, and on November 12 laid the keel, which was 30 feet long. The work progressed slowly, for they had to fell the trees and drag the timber to their shipyard, where the planks were trimmed. As the frame of the vessel began to take shape the Tahitians would come crowding round, examining every part; but while they admitted that she would be a better vessel than their own canoes, most of them were doubtful if she would ever be finished, and they wondered "how the seamen could keep at it without being tired."

Two of the mutineers who had not joined in this work were Churchill and Thompson. Churchill had been living with his *tyo*, a chief named Vayheeadooa, and when Vayheeadooa died without leaving any children, Churchill succeeded to his name, position, and property, in accordance

with Tahitian custom. Thompson, the most truculent of the men who had stayed in the island, quarrelled with Churchill and shot him, hoping, perhaps, to become chief. The natives, however, hated Thompson, who had always treated them badly and had already shot a Tahitian man and a young child. Led by a man named Patirre, half a dozen of them determined to avenge the death of their new chief. This is Morrison's account of what happened:

"They went to Thompson's house & saluted him by the name of Vayheeadooa & told him he was now Chief, & such like flattering stories, till Patirre got between him and his arms, & being a Stout man, knocked him down. The others whipld a short plank (which happened to be at hand) across his Breast, and Placed one on each end, while Patirre ran for a large Stone, with which he dashed his Scull to pieces. They then cut off his head and buried the Body."

" 'Don't be angry that it was I who killed him,' said Patirre to Morrison, 'seeing that he had killd my Chief and my Friend.' "

Morrison promised that Patirre should not be hurt for what he had done, and says, "I looked on him as the instrument in the Hand of Providence to punish such Crimes."

## § 6

Meanwhile, work on the schooner progressed, and they celebrated her completion on July 4 by firing a volley and drinking a keg of island-

brewed cider. At Poeno's request one of the Tahitian priests performed a ceremony over her, walking round and round the vessel, stopping at the stem and stern to mutter short sentences in an unknown dialect, and tossing young plaintain trees on her deck from time to time.

On July 6 Poeno brought 400 men to help move her to the beach a mile away. There she was launched and christened the *Resolution*.

Morrison and his friends then began fitting her and storing her for sea, their greatest difficulty being canvas for the sails. The work was delayed by an outbreak of hostilities between two of the Tahitian tribes, one of which had invaded the Oparre district. The chiefs invoked the aid of the Europeans, who marched to the battle area, and having routed the enemy, secured enough matting in return for their services to make a mainsail, foresail, and jib for the schooner.

After peace had been concluded, they completed fitting, and made some preliminary trips along the coast. They still required more matting, but found it hard to procure, since the natives did not want to part with the Europeans, and knew that they could not leave the island without sails. Finally Morrison and his friends, finding they could get no more mats, abandoned their project of trying to reach Batavia, and since it was then December and the rainy season was setting in, they beached the schooner and built a shelter over her.

There she remained until March 1791, when fresh trouble broke out among the Tahitians, and

they launched her again in order to be of service and sailed for Oparre.

Stewart and Heywood seem to have had no part either in the building of the schooner or in the operations against the natives. They had remained at Matavai, living quietly, and keeping aloof from the seamen.

Thus they must have spent happy days, Stewart with his Peggy (who now had a daughter) and Heywood perhaps with a *vahine* of his own—he was now nineteen—living an idyllic life, in and out of the water all day, sharing the Tahitians' work and play, their bodies as brown as their hosts', and as copiously tattooed; for since much tattooing was a mark of dignity in the island, they had followed the Tahitian custom.

Then one morning—it was March 23—Peter Heywood was on his way up to the mountains on an expedition with two of his Tahitian friends, when he saw a English frigate working into Matavai Bay.

## VI

### SHIPWRECK AND COURT-MARTIAL

#### § I

DEEPLY as Peter Heywood had come to love Tahiti and its people, he must have watched the ship that was entering the bay with gladness in his heart: to him she meant home—his home in the Isle of Man; soon he would see his parents again and Nussy, his beloved sister; and once more he would be able to take up the thread of his profession where the mutiny had snapped it.

So much is clear from his first action. He ran down the hill and joined Stewart, who was on the beach with a canoe. Coleman, who lived near them, had already put off to the ship. When she had reached her berth they launched their boat and went aboard, happy in the thought that the day they had waited for so long had come at last. They found the frigate to be H.M.S. *Pandora*, commanded by Captain Edward Edwards, and learnt that Thomas Hayward, now a lieutenant, was one of her officers.

As soon as Lieutenant Larkin, the officer of the watch, had reported their arrival, Captain Edwards sent for them and interviewed them in his cabin.



"I suppose you have heard of the affair of the *Bounty*, sir?" asked Peter Heywood, expecting to be received in a friendly way.

Captain Edwards grimly assured him that he had; and told him that he had been sent to the Pacific for the very purpose of arresting the mutineers.

Heywood and Stewart both protested that they were not mutineers: they had been kept in the ship against their will. Edwards said that made no difference; his orders were to bring back every officer and man he could find. Heywood then begged that Thomas Hayward should be sent for: Hayward had been his friend, he said, and would attest their innocence.

But when Hayward appeared he looked at them contemptuously, and said he had no knowledge of the part they had played. They began to protest again, but Edwards called one of the marines and ordered him to put them both in irons.

The next of the *Bounty's* people to go aboard was Robert Skinner. Michael Byrn walked all night to give himself up. That left nine men still at large.

Now, it was a coincidence that Morrison and his party should have launched the schooner a few days before the *Pandora's* arrival; but when Captain Edwards heard that they were sailing along the coast in her, it was natural that he should think they were trying to escape. He accordingly despatched Hayward and Lieutenant Corner with two armed boats to capture them.

They sighted the schooner early next morning, but she got under way and stood out to sea. The boats gave chase, Hayward in the pinnace, Corner in the launch, but could not come up with her, and at dusk they abandoned the attempt and returned to the ship next morning.

According to Morrison's journal, he and his party received warning that the boats were on their way, and having landed Brown, who happened to be on board, they put to sea with the intention of reaching the *Pandora* and going aboard of their own accord, hoping thereby to receive better treatment than if they waited to be made prisoners.

This was reasonable enough, but the schooner did not sail towards the ship. After the boats had given up the chase she hove-to and put back to land the following day.

Burkett, Sumner, Muspratt, Hillbrant, McIntosh, and Millward then made off to the hills, leaving Morrison, Norman, and Ellison in the schooner. Morrison declares that his intention was then to make for the ship, but that one of the chiefs tried to persuade him to follow his comrades to the hills, where he would be safe. Morrison and the others refused, and although the Tahitians tried to stop them, they finally made their way along the coast until they found the *Pandora's* launch, which Edwards had sent out again, with Corner in charge. It was four in the morning, and the whole of the boat's company was asleep, but Morrison woke Corner up and surrendered himself with Norman and Ellison,

They were sent off to the ship and put in irons with the others.

Edwards then sent out two parties after the men who were still at large, with the intention of surrounding them. These six led the *Pandora's* people a dance for over a week, and had they been content to remain in the mountains, they might have held out far longer and even got away to another island, for they could have counted on the surreptitious help of their friends. As it was, they left the hills—perhaps with the intention of making for the sea. The story told by Hamilton, the *Pandora's* surgeon, is that on the night of April 7 Brown, who was acting as guide to Hayward's party, found them asleep in a forest shelter. Although it was pitch dark he was able to identify them by feeling their toes, which were not spread like those of natives.

Next morning Hayward drew up his men and waited for them. As they came down the hill he called upon them to lay down their arms and they submitted without a struggle. Since none of them but McIntosh could have had much hope of escaping the gallows, it seems to have been a tame surrender for desperate men.

Brown was entered on the *Pandora's* books as an able seaman, and left Tahiti in the ship.

## § 2

After Bligh's arrival home in March 1790, the Admiralty had wasted no time in commissioning a ship to search for the mutineers. They selected

the *Pandora*, a frigate of 24 guns, with a complement of over 100 men. Captain Edwards was chosen to command her on his high reputation for seamanship and discipline—he was to prove himself a harder man than Bligh. His instructions were to proceed first to Tahiti (thus Christian's prophecy proved correct), but if he failed to find the mutineers there he was to cruise among the neighbouring islands of the Pacific in search of them.

The *Pandora* sailed on November 7, 1790, a few days after Bligh had been acquitted of blame for the loss of the *Bounty*. She rounded Cape Horn, and on her passage across the Pacific she passed and named Ducie Island, 300 miles from Pitcairn, reaching Tahiti on March 23, 1791, having touched no port but Rio de Janeiro.

Once Edwards had secured his prisoners he made no attempt to differentiate between them. He refused to listen to the pleadings of Stewart and Heywood. Even Norman, McIntosh, and Coleman, against whose names Bligh had specifically written, "were detained against their Consent," were manacled hand and foot with the rest.

His justification was that the law against mutiny was severe, and required every man who had remained in the *Bounty* to prove his innocence. Even Bligh's word was not enough. It was for a court-martial to decide. His specific orders were "to keep the mutineers as closely confined as may preclude all possibility of their escaping, having, however, proper regard to the preservation of their lives, that they may be brought

home to undergo the punishment due to their demerits."

He carried out the first part of these instructions to the letter.

He set the *Pandora's* carpenters to build "a round-house" on the after-part of the quarter-deck for the prisoners' "more effectual security, airy and healthy situation," and to prevent their having any communication with the ship's company, as he says in his report to the Admiralty. George Hamilton, the surgeon, described this erection in his book, *A Voyage Round the World*, as "the most desirable place in the ship," but the prisoners, who were forced to live in it, had other views. It was 11 feet long on deck and 18 feet wide at the bulkhead. The entrance was by a scuttle on the top, 20 inches square, secured by a bolt. The only provision for air were two iron gratings in the bulkhead, 9 inches square, and stern ports barred inside and out with iron. Sentries were placed on the roof, and no one was allowed any communication with the prisoners but the master-at-arms.

Such was the desirable residence in which fourteen men were confined. With that odd but glorious sense of humour which has always puzzled foreigners, and is the peculiar heritage of the English, they called the place Pandora's Box.

All the prisoners, including the two midshipmen, were kept with hands and legs in irons. The officer of the watch had orders to examine the irons before he was relieved. One night

McIntosh succeeded in slipping one of his legs out of its shackle, and when this was reported to Edwards he ordered all the irons to be tightened up. Larkin would plant his foot on a prisoner's chest and haul on the handcuffs to see if he could pull them off. If he succeeded they were tightened until there was no possibility of turning the hand, and when the prisoners' wrists began to swell, Larkin told them that irons were not intended to fit like gloves.

"The heat of the place when it was calm," wrote Morrison "was so intense that the Sweat frequently ran in Streams to the Scuppers, and produced Maggots in a short time; the Hammocks being dirty when we got them we found stored with Vermin of another kind, which we had no method of erradicating but by lying on the Plank; and tho our Friends would have supplyd us with plenty of Cloth they were not permitted to do it, and our only remedy was to lay Naked—these troublesome Neighbours and the two necessary tubbs which were constantly kept in the place helped to render our situation truely disagreeable."

"Truely disagreeable," is surely a masterpiece of understatement; and there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of Morrison's statement of the conditions, for Peter Heywood confirmed them in a letter which he wrote to his mother from Batavia, adding that none of them was ever allowed out of this den.

Morrison has left us a poignant description of the Tahitian women's grief while the *Pandora* was refitting and watering in Matavai Bay. To

me it seems one of the most moving passages in the literature of the sea:

"During the time we staid, the Woemen with whom we had cohabitated on the Island came frequently under the Stern (bringing their Children of which there were born 6—four Girls and two boys, & several of the Woemen big with Child) Cutting their Heads till the Blood discoloured the water about them, their Female friends acting their part also & making bitter lamentations; but when they came to be known, they were always driven away by the Captain's orders & none of them suffered to come near the Ship."

### § 3

The *Pandora* sailed on May 8, 1791, in company with Morrison's schooner, the *Resolution*, which Edwards thought might be useful in his search for the remaining mutineers.

He had no idea where to look for them. If Christian had had a definite plan when he sailed from Tahiti, he had kept his secret well. Only one of the prisoners could make a suggestion: this was Hillbrant, who said that Christian had told him the night before he sailed that he intended to take the *Bounty* to an uninhabited island which Commodore Byron had discovered in 1767 and named the Duke of York's Island—now known as Oatafu, in the Union group.

Thither Edwards went, calling at several other islands on his way, including Aitutaki, which

Bligh had discovered, and Palmerston Island, where the discovery of a ship's yard marked "Bounty's Driver Yard" aroused expectations which were not fulfilled. Edwards found no trace of the mutineers on the Duke of York's Island, where the *Pandora's* cutter, manned by a midshipman and four men, was blown out to sea in a squall and never seen again.

A few days later Edwards discovered Nukunono, another island in the Union group, and then ran south to the Navigators' Islands, or Samoa. While cruising there on June 22 he lost sight of the *Resolution* in a thick shower of rain and failed to find her next day. He sailed on towards the Friendly Islands hoping to come upon her at Nomuka, which he had appointed as a rendezvous, but waited for her in vain. He put in at Tofua, where he refrained from inflicting any punishment, although Hayward recognized several of the men who had taken part in the attack on Norton, being afraid that the schooner might arrive after he had sailed. He then returned to Samoa, and having cruised there again went back to Nomuka. Finding that the schooner had still not made the rendezvous he gave her up for lost.

By that time he had spent three months searching for the mutineers. Even though he was unaware of the existence of many islands that still remained to be discovered at that time, to have examined half those that were marked on his chart would have been a hopeless task. Moreover, there was always the possibility that the



*Bounty* had struck a reef and gone down with all hands.

Accordingly, on August 2, "thinking it time to return to England," he sailed from Nomuka, and having made the coast of New Guinea (which he mistook for one of the Louisiade Islands) he sailed southward in the hope of finding a safe passage through the Barrier Reef.

On August 28 Corner was sent off in the ship's yawl to examine what appeared to be a channel, while the *Pandora* lay-to. At five o'clock Corner made a signal to report that the passage was fit for the ship, but Edwards, wishing to have more exact information, signalled the boat's recall. Before it could reach the ship the swift darkness of the tropics began to fall and they lost sight of it. Flares were lit and muskets fired, but it was not until nearly seven o'clock that the yawl was seen under the *Pandora's* stern. While it was being hoisted aboard, the current swept the ship on to the reef. Edwards tried to get her off, first by the sails and then by carrying out an anchor, but she struck again, this time so heavily that ten minutes later the carpenter reported 4 feet of water in the hold.

All hands were turned to the pumps and set to bailing at the hatchways; but it was a stormy night, and the wind kept her beating on the rocks, so that with every surge those on board expected the masts to go by the board. The leak continued to gain on her, and then she beat over the reef, with 8 feet of water in the hold.

Edwards now hoped that he might save her by

hauling a sail under her bottom to reduce the leak, but as she began to settle the water poured in faster than ever and he feared she would sink before daylight.

His one idea now was to keep her afloat until dawn. Every man in the ship fell to bailing and pumping, and three of the prisoners, McIntosh, Norman, and Coleman were let out of irons to take their turn. Hamilton tells us that to give the men strength without intoxication some strong ale they had brewed at Nomuka was served out at intervals, and he pays this tribute to the crew: "The men behaved with the utmost intrepidity and obedience, not a man flinching from his post." Edwards, as little given to eulogy as Bligh, is silent on this point.

To lighten the ship Edwards gave orders for some of the guns to be thrown overboard; one of them crushed a man to death as the ship took a heel to leeward; and a spare top-mast came down from the booms and killed another.

The plight of the *Pandora's* company was bad enough: a ship sinking in the darkness, storm raging about them, no port within a thousand miles. But their plight was an enviable one compared with that of the prisoners in Pandora's Box. Those on deck had at least a chance of saving their lives; the prisoners were locked in and manacled hand and foot. So strong is man's instinct for self-preservation that to deprive him of its possibility is the worst torture a fellow-being can commit. Yet that is what Captain Edwards did that night.

With every heave of the ship the prisoners were in danger of battering one another to death with their irons. If she sank they must go down with her. In their extremity they broke their irons, and called up to the officer of the watch to say what they had done. When Edwards heard this, he ordered them to be handcuffed and leg-ironed again. They pleaded for mercy and begged to be allowed to work at the pumps. He refused to listen, and set the master-at-arms and the ship's corporal as extra sentinels over them, each armed with a brace of pistols, with orders to fire if they "made any Motion," threatening to shoot or hang from the yard-arm anyone who should try to break irons again.

"We found there was no remedy but prayer," wrote Morrison simply, "as we never expected to see Daylight, and having recommended ourselves to the Almighty protection we lay down and seemd for a while to forget our miserable Situation."

There is no reason to disbelieve his account, for Heywood confirmed it in his letter to his mother.

The ship lasted till daylight. By 6.30 the hold was full of water, the lower deck awash. Edwards summoned his officers to a council. They decided unanimously that no more could be done to preserve the ship, and it was "concluded as next expedient to endeavour to save the lives of the Crew." Edwards prudently had this reduced to writing, and got the surgeon and the purser to sign the document. Then, presumably, he gave the order to abandon ship and take to the boats,

which had been lying astern throughout the night.

From the number who were drowned it is clear that this order might have been given long before it was, for Edwards had known overnight that the ship was doomed, and she was on the very point of sinking when they began to leave her.

The wretched prisoners, seeing the officers going into the boats by the stern ladders, begged that they might not be forgotten. According to Morrison, Edwards then ordered Hodges, the armourer's mate, to let Muspratt, Byrn, and Skinner out of irons. Hodges went into the Box, but Skinner, being too eager, was hauled up with his handcuffs on. The other two followed close behind, and the scuttle was shut and barred before Hodges could get out. He then knocked the irons off Stewart and Morrison, while all but two of the others, Burkett and Hillbrant, succeeded in getting their own irons off. While they were doing so Morrison begged the master-at-arms to open the scuttle.

"Never fear, my boys, we'll all go to hell together," was the reply.

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when the ship took a sudden heel to port and from those in the water a cry arose "There she goes." At the same moment the master-at-arms and the sentries were rolled overboard. Looking through the stern ports Morrison saw Edwards swimming to the pinnace, which had drawn off astern.

The water was actually pouring into the Box when the boatswain's mate, William Moulter, hearing their cries, climbed on to the roof and

opened the scuttle. The prisoners scrambled out: all but Hillbrant, who was too late and went down in his irons with the ship.

Heywood dived overboard with the prayer-book his mother had given him clenched between his teeth. Morrison just cleared the driver-boom before the ship sank. A falling gangway killed Stewart and Sumner as they were in the water. Skinner was drowned in his handcuffs.

Morrison, seeing Heywood start swimming for one of the boats with the aid of a short plank, resolved to follow his example: "throwing away my trousers, I bound my loins in a sash after the Taheite Manner"—such was his modesty—and after having been in the water for an hour and a half he was taken up with Heywood by one of the boats.

They landed on a sandbank, or cay, three miles from the wreck. It was no more than 150 yards in circumference and only 6 feet are above high-water. There they found all their fellow-prisoners but the four who had been drowned. Burkett had been picked up in his handcuffs. Of the ship's company 31 had been drowned and 89 saved.

Edwards, in his report to the Admiralty, does not mention one word about the prisoners during the wreck, beyond mentioning that he lost four. Hamilton says nothing but to record that "the prisoners were ordered to be let out of irons." Morrison distinctly states that Edwards gave orders for the release of only three men, whom he names. Here one might be inclined to give Edwards the benefit of any doubt, were it not for

the fact that Heywood distinctly confirms Morrison by saying "three only were suffered to go up."

#### § 4

Nor did Edwards show his prisoners any more consideration on the cay, which became known as Wreck Island. He kept them apart from the other survivors, and when they begged for a boat's sail to shelter them from the blazing sun (most of them were naked) he refused, although no other use was made of it. Morrison tells us that, having been cooped up for five months, the sun had such an effect upon their bare bodies that they had their skin "flea'd off" from head to foot, even though they buried themselves in the sand during the heat of the day.

The master took a boat to the wreck next day, but returned with little more than the ship's cat, having found her sitting on the cross-trees of one of the top-gallant masts, which were protruding from the water. On August 31 the *Pandora's* four boats set off for Timor, the prisoners being distributed among them. According to Peter Heywood their provisions were no more than two or three bags of biscuit, two or three beakers of water, and a little wine. Edwards makes it clear that they had some portable soup and essence of malt, but the shortage of supplies proclaims his inefficiency, seeing that he had twelve hours to provision his boats. Had more men been saved, they could scarcely have survived.

Even so Edwards got his people to Kupang without losing a man, keeping them on a daily allowance of biscuit which varied from 2 to 3 oz.,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of soup,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of essence of malt, 2 small glasses of water, and 1 of wine.

In one way the voyage was less arduous than Bligh's had been, since the men were not so far spent; in another it was worse, for the weather was fine and they were tortured by thirst. But when they reached Kupang, on September 16, the Dutch authorities treated them with the greatest kindness, even as they had treated Bligh and the men of the *Bounty's* launch. The prisoners were not allowed to share in this hospitality, but were confined in stocks in the castle, exhausted as they were.

On October 6 they sailed for Batavia with the rest of the survivors in the *Rembang*, a Dutch East Indiaman, with some escaped convicts from Port Jackson. Having been dismasted in a typhoon, the *Rembang* put in at Samarang, in Java, where Edwards found the lost schooner *Resolution*. She had had an adventurous voyage, and the reason for her having missed the *Pandora* at the rendezvous was that her commander, Oliver (master's mate), had mistaken Tofua for Nomuka. He had gone on to the Fiji Islands, where he had waited for the ship for five weeks, and had finally reached Samarang with his company complete, although one had died after his arrival. Oliver's log has never been found, but he and his companions must have been the first Europeans to have had any extensive intercourse with

the Fijians, and if anyone ever does discover it, it will be a find of first-rate importance in the history of Pacific exploration.

Edwards took the *Resolution* on to Batavia, where he landed on November 7, and put her up for auction. He bought her in himself (so Morrison tells us) and sent her as a present to the Governor of Timor, distributing the proceeds of the sale among his men; although none of those who had built her received anything. She was afterwards employed in the sea-otter trade; later she was used in surveying the coast of China, and saved the lives of the crew of H.M.S. *Providence* when that ship was wrecked off the coast of Formosa in 1797.

At Batavia the prisoners were lodged in an old hulk in the roads, with the officers and men of the *Pandora*. Here they did some tailoring for the ship's company and plaited hats of leaves, and so were able to buy themselves some clothes—although Edwards put a stop to their work as soon as he heard of it—but with the exception of McIntosh, Norman, and Coleman, they were allowed on deck only twice in six weeks, “and here we enjoyed our Health,” says Morrison, “tho the *Pandora's* people fell sick and died apace.”

On December 23 they embarked with Captain Edwards in the Dutch ship *Vreedenberg*, bound for the Cape. Morrison complains that their rations were short, and says, “Our lodgings were none of the best, as we lay on rough logs of Timber. . . . The Deck also over us was very leaky, by which means we were continually wet,



being alternately drenched with Salt water, the Urine of the Hogs or the Rain which happend to fall."

On reaching the Cape they were transferred to H.M.S. *Gorgon*, bound from Port Jackson to England. Their treatment then became less rigorous; they received full rations, were allowed on deck, and had only one leg in irons, and nothing brings home their hardships more touchingly than Morrison's reference to an officer who "very humanely gave us a Sail to lay on, which by us was thought a luxury."

The *Gorgon* reached Spithead on June 18, 1792, when the prisoners were removed to H.M.S. *Hector*, to await court-martial. "There," says Morrison, "we were treated in a manner that renders the Humanity of her Captain and Officers much Honor & had beds given us & evry Indulgence that our Circumstances would admit of allowed."

Those passages seem worth quoting, if only to show that Morrison's journal, when referring to his officers, is not always a record of complaint, and that on the rare occasions when he did receive decent treatment he could appreciate it.

On September 10 Captain Edwards, with the survivors of the *Pandora*, appeared before a court-martial, held on board H.M.S. *Duke* in Portsmouth Harbour, to answer for the loss of his ship.

Edwards put in a copy of the report he had sent home from Batavia, describing the wreck, together with the document which recorded the

officers' decision to abandon her. Larkin, Corner, and the other officers swore to the truth of the captain's statements and declared they had no complaints to make against him.

The court then found that neither Captain Edwards nor any of his officers and men were to blame for the loss of the ship, and honourably acquitted them. Neither the President, Lord Hood, nor any member of the court, asked Edwards a single pertinent question as to why he had taken his ship so near the reef when darkness was coming on, not one question as to why the loss of life was so heavy, not one question as to what steps he had taken to preserve his prisoners' lives in accordance with his official instructions. Nor did any of those with him lift up his voice to inform the court the treatment those prisoners had received.

Edwards became a full Admiral in 1810.

## § 5

Two days later the court-martial of the ten surviving *Bounty* prisoners began. It lasted five days, from September 12 to 18, Sunday intervening.

The president of the court was Lord Hood, Vice-Admiral of the Blue and Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth and Spithead, and eleven captains sat with him as members.

The charge against all the prisoners was "for mutinously running away with his Majesty's

armed vessel the *Bounty* and deserting from His Majesty's Service."

The penalty for mutiny with violence was death, as it is still, under Section 10 of the Naval Discipline Act of 1866, although where the mutiny is without violence Section 11 now restricts the death penalty to the ringleader. The prisoners might also have been charged with piracy, since their actions came within the definition of piracy at common law.

As is the custom still, proceedings opened with the reading of the "Circumstantial Letter," which set out in detail the facts on which the charge was founded. The members of the court and the Judge Advocate having been sworn, Bligh's despatch from Kupang was put in and read, followed by Edwards's report and an extract from Bligh's journal relating to the mutiny.

The witnesses for the prosecution were Fryer (the master), Cole (boatswain), Peckover (gunner), Purcell (carpenter), Hayward and Hallett (now both promoted lieutenants), John Smith (captain's servant), and Edwards, Larkin, and Corner of the *Pandora*. Bligh himself was not present, since he had sailed on his second expedition to procure breadfruit from Tahiti, so that the prisoners had no opportunity to cross-examine him on the documents put in against them. In such circumstances ordinary written statements would not have been admissible by the laws of evidence, but these were public documents, which were, and still are, admissible, since there is a legal presumption that the records made by an

official of the Crown in the course of his duty are true.

Before the first witness was called Peter Heywood put in an application for a separate trial. This was refused, and all the prisoners were tried together. It will therefore be convenient to indicate the chief evidence against each man, and the line of his defence.

There is no doubt that it was fortunate for Peter Heywood that Bligh was not in court to give evidence against him. Bligh was convinced of Heywood's guilt. In a letter he wrote to his wife from Kupang he spoke of the confidence he had placed in Heywood and bitterly cited him as one of the ringleaders, adding that he had now reason to curse the day he "ever knew a Christian or a Heywood or indeed a Manks man." He classed Heywood with the mutineers in his log and his despatches, and later in his printed narratives, one of which at least was published before the court-martial. Nor did he make any bones about denouncing him to his family. In a letter he wrote to Colonel Holwell (Heywood's uncle), dated March 26, 1790, he said, "With much concern I inform you that your nephew, Peter Heywood, is among the mutineers. His ingratitude to me is of the blackest dye . . . and it will give me much pleasure to hear that his friends can bear the loss of him without much concern." A few days later he wrote to Mrs. Heywood (who, poor lady, had sought reassuring news of her son): "His baseness is beyond all description."

These direct accusations, however, were not

made at the court-martial. The first four witnesses—Fryer, Cole, Peckover, and Purcell—said nothing which definitely implicated Heywood, and none considered him to have been on Christian's side. With Hayward's evidence, however, the case against him took a different aspect. Hayward said he had seen him in his berth, and had told him to go in the boat, and supposed, since he had not done so, that he was on the side of the mutineers. Hallett ("that little wretch," as Nussy Heywood afterwards called him) made the damning statement that when Heywood was on deck Bligh had said something to him, whereupon he had laughed and turned away. The defence tried to break these statements down, but they must have had an unfortunate effect upon the minds of Heywood's judges.

In the long written statement which was read out on his behalf there were three lines of defence: first, that in his youth and inexperience he was so confused that he did not know what to do; secondly, that the boat could hold no more; thirdly, that he finally decided to go with Bligh, but was confined in his berth until the launch was far astern. Both Cole and Purcell had given evidence that he had been kept below, and he would have done well to concentrate on this line of defence rather than confuse the issue with rambling and sentimental appeals about his youthful apprehensions. But the weakness of his case was that he had made no definite appeal to be allowed to go with Bligh.

The evidence of the first four witnesses against

Morrison was favourable on the whole. None of them had seen him under arms, although none could say that he had tried to save the ship or made any attempt to go with Bligh. Then Hayward spoke of his having helped to clear the boats, and gave it as his opinion that he was helping the mutineers because his countenance was "rejoiced," while Hallett said he had seen him under arms after the launch was veered astern and had heard him call out, "If my friends enquire after me, tell them I am somewhere in the South Seas." Corner deposed that he had surrendered voluntarily at Tahiti.

Morrison made a plausible defence, saying that he had been prepared to join anyone in an attempt to retake the ship and that when the officers had gone into the boat without making any effort, he had remained on board because Bligh had become anxious about overloading it and had said some must stay in the ship. But, like Heywood, he could not produce any evidence that he had tried to go with Bligh.

The case against Norman, Coleman, and McIntosh was different. The evidence supported the note Bligh had written against their names in his despatch from Kupang that they had been detained against their will. It was obvious that Byrn, being almost blind, could have taken no active part in the mutiny, and he was able to show that the mutineers had kept him in the ship because they did not want to lose their fiddler.

The evidence against Burkett was black. Bligh had stated that Burkett had been one of the men

who had entered his cabin with Christian. Fryer and Hayward corroborated this, and all the witnesses deposed to having seen him under arms. He could put up no better defence than that he had been forced to take up arms "by threats of immediate death."

Ellison's case was little better. Most of the witnesses had seen him under arms, and Hayward testified that when Bligh was brought up on deck Ellison had run up with a bayonet in his hand, saying, "Damn him, I'll be sentry over him." Ellison based his defence on the fact that Bligh had asked that no more should go into the launch, and pleaded his youth and inexperience, since he had been "no more than between sixteen and seventeen years of age at the time of the mutiny."

Millward had been one of the sentries over Fryer. Fryer very fairly said that he had seemed friendly at one time, but that as soon as overtures were made to him, he had cocked his musket. Both Hayward and Hallett had seen him under arms, so that his case was almost as black as Burkett's. His defence was that he had had arms forced into his hands, and that Christian had ordered him to stand guard over Fryer's cabin. He also said that he promised to stand by Morrison, a fact which Morrison confirms in his journal, and that he remained in the ship only because Bligh promised to do justice to the loyal men who remained behind.

The evidence against Muspratt was not so strong. Neither Fryer nor Hallett had seen him

during the mutiny. Peckover and Purcell had seen him, although not under arms. But the redoubtable Hayward said that he had taken up a musket ten minutes after the mutiny had begun, and Cole had seen him armed abaft the main fore-hatchway. Muspratt admitted having taken up a musket which one of the mutineers had laid down, but maintained that he had done so because Millward had told him of Fryer's project to rescue the ship. Unfortunately he had not allowed Fryer to see his eagerness to help, although his statement is supported by Morrison. Since there was no evidence against Byrn and Norman, he asked the court to acquit these two prisoners forthwith, so that he might call them to give evidence on his behalf, in accordance with the custom "in the Criminal Courts of Justice on the land," but the court refused to take this course.

The court found that the charges were proved against Heywood, Morrison, Ellison, Burkett, Millward, and Muspratt, and sentenced them "to suffer Death by being hanged by the Neck, on board such of His Majesty's Ship or Ships of War" as the Commissioners of the Admiralty should direct, but "did humbly and most earnestly recommend the said Peter Heywood and James Morrison to His Majesty's Royal Mercy."

The court also found that the charges had not been proved against Norman, Coleman, McIntosh, and Byrn, and adjudged them to be acquitted.

After judgment had been delivered, Muspratt, who was defended by an astute lawyer, Stephen Barney, put in a written protest against having



been debarred from calling witnesses who would have tended to prove his innocence. His sentence was thereupon respited, and the legal point was referred to twelve judges of the King's Bench, who decided that the evidence should have been admitted, and the sentence was accordingly quashed.

As to Heywood and Morrison, the court had no alternative but to convict them, since neither had made any overt attempt to go with Bligh. They were thus convicted, not for being active in the mutiny, but for being passive, and the only sentence the court could pass upon them was death. But the recommendation to mercy caused the extenuating circumstances to be examined, with the result that, a month after the trial, they were both granted a free pardon. Both remained in the Service. Heywood had a distinguished career, rose to the rank of captain, and died in 1831, while Morrison eventually became gunner in the *Blenheim*, under Admiral Sir Thomas Troubridge, and perished in her when she was lost with all hands in a storm off the coast of Madagascar in 1807.

A few days after Heywood and Morrison had received their pardons, the three condemned men were publicly executed on board H.M.S. *Brunswick*, in the presence of a party of seamen from each ship in Portsmouth Harbour. According to Captain Hamond of the *Brunswick*, they behaved with penitence, and Millward is said to have made the following address to the sailors who had been sent to see them hanged:

"Brother Seamen, you see before you three lusty young fellows about to suffer a shameful death for the dreadful crime of mutiny and desertion. Take warning never to desert your officers, and should they behave ill to you, remember it is not their cause, but the cause of your country you are bound to support."

That speech is a little difficult to swallow. It was a time when discipline in the Navy was not high, and the Admiralty may have seen in the execution a good opportunity to disseminate a little admonitory propaganda.

Thus it was that all but three of those who left Christian at Tahiti came to violent ends. Of Christian the authorities still had no information; nor were they to have any for many years to come.

## VII

### PITCAIRN ISLAND

#### § I

WHEN Fletcher Christian sailed away for Tahiti in the *Bounty* on September 23, 1789, he had with him his eight European companions, the young chief of Tubuai and his two friends, three Tahitian men, and nineteen native women. Of these women three were the wives of the Tahitian men and one of them had with her a little girl of ten months. The remainder were the *vahine* of the Europeans. When the ship was a mile beyond the reef, one of the women, unable to bear the thought of parting from her own people, dived overboard and swam ashore. Next morning, when the ship was close to the island of Eimeo, a canoe came off, and six of the women (the least attractive, we may presume) were allowed to go off in her, so that they might return to Tahiti. This left twelve women on board, so that each man, European and native, had a woman, except the Tubuaians, who had left their island in a hurry, and presumably had not had time to find new wives before the *Bounty* sailed from Tahiti. Christian probably allowed them and the Tahitian men to come because he knew

they would be useful in working the ship, and more useful still when it came to making a settlement on the island he meant to find. If he had kept the other women in the ship there might have been less trouble than there was.

Had he been able to choose his shipmates he would probably not have picked all those who elected to sail with him. The only officer among them was Edward Young, who had West Indian blood in his veins (he was born in St. Kitts), but was well connected on his father's side and nephew of Sir George Young, a captain in the Navy. We know little more of him, but at least he must have been a man of some intellectual attainments, and could help Christian navigate the ship.

Brown was probably a simple, decent fellow, more used to gardens than the sea. The remaining seven were able seamen, except Mills, the gunner's mate, a sturdy, raw-boned man of about forty. Smith and Martin (an American) were probably the best of the seamen; indeed, it is surprising that Martin did not choose to remain in Tahiti, for he had tried to go with Bligh in the launch and would probably have escaped conviction. Williams was a Guernseyman, with an excitable temperament, as time was soon to show; McKoy was a Scot with a thirst for strong liquor; and Quintal, although only twenty-one at the time of the mutiny, was as tough and as rough as any man in the ship.

Christian must have given much thought to his destination. The island he sought must be far from the track of ships. It must have no con-

venient anchorage which would tempt a passing vessel to put in. His experiences at Tubuai showed that an uninhabited island would be best suited to his purpose. And it must be fertile and have water.

Whether he came to any decision before leaving Tahiti we shall never know. But there is no doubt that a book he found in Bligh's cabin after the mutiny gave him his idea. This was the narrative of Captain Carteret's voyage round the world in the *Swallow*. There he found related the discovery of a Pacific island, 3,000 miles west of Chile, by a midshipman called Pitcairn on July 2, 1767; it was like a great rock rising from the sea, about five miles round, apparently uninhabited, with trees on it, and a stream of fresh water running down one side. The surf breaking upon the rocks rendered landing difficult. After examining it from his ship Captain Carteret had called it Pitcairn's Island and sailed on.

To Christian it must have seemed the very place for his refuge from the world. Yet he did not reach it until January, 1790: more than three months after he had left Tahiti. But it must be remembered that he would have had to beat up against the prevailing wind; storms may have detained him; he may have explored the Marquesas or some other group. From the account given by one of the Tahitian women, Jenny, who returned to Tahiti in 1818, we know that Christian did examine a couple of small islands, but sailed on because he found them inhabited. That he did not go to Palmerston Island is made clear by

Morrison, who, referring to the driver-yard which had so excited Captain Edwards, remarked that it had been in a raft which had gone adrift from Tubuai.

Christian and his companions found the island all that Captain Carteret had described, with iron-bound cliffs and a central peak which reached 1,000 feet. They landed in a bay, formed by towering cliffs and guarded by several large rocks and a tiny islet, with a narrow shingly beach, which afterwards became known as Bounty Bay. The island proved to be fertile and uninhabited—although there were signs of earlier occupation—with a deep spring up in the hills.

They chose a spot where they could form a settlement, on the northern side of the island, a quarter of a mile from the tableland at the top of the cliff. Then they stripped the *Bounty* of everything of value, and on January 23, 1790, they set fire to her and let her drive on to the rocky cliffs.

I like to think that the final act of destruction cannot have been easy for Christian. She was a brave ship, never laboursome in storm, and sailing handsomely in fair weather. Seamen love their ships; for two years she had been his home. Yet there was no other way. He dared not keep her lest she should attract the attention of a passing vessel. And there must have been another reason. By destroying her he put it beyond the power of his companions to leave the island and betray his hiding-place.

## § 2

Once committed to the island, the mutineers set about building their houses and divided the land into nine equal portions, one for each European, for which they drew lots. No land was allowed the natives, although there was enough for all.

Each man then began to cultivate his own garden, planting yams and breadfruit and seeds they had brought with them from Tahiti. After their first enthusiasm had worn off they made the natives do most of the manual labour, while the women cooked for them and collected birds'-eggs from the cliffs.

For the first two years they seem to have lived in perfect harmony. The first child to be born was Thursday Fletcher October Christian; others followed. But it is a well-known fact that British people, when they live in small communities, do not get on very well together. So it was with the settlers on Pitcairn.

The first serious trouble was when Williams, whose wife Fasto had fallen over a cliff while collecting eggs about a month after their arrival, became dissatisfied with his single existence, and threatened to leave the island in one of the *Bounty's* boats unless he were given another wife.

Unfortunately, there were only enough women to go round; and none of the Europeans was prepared to give up his. But they did not want to risk anyone leaving, and finally forced one of the Tahitians, Talalu, to give Williams his wife.

The natives were furious at this act of aggres-

sion, and hatched a plot to destroy their oppressors. Unfortunately for them, some of the women learnt the secret, and Talalu's wife revealed it by singing a song "Why does black man sharpen axe? To kill white man."

The wives of Brown and Christian heard this, and told their husbands. Christian seized his musket and went in search of Talalu. He met one of Talalu's friends, Ohuhu, taxed him with the plot, and, hoping to frighten him, fired his musket, which he had loaded with powder only. Another story is that the weapon missed fire.

Ohuhu, thinking (perhaps rightly) that Christian meant to kill him, fled to the hills; Talalu followed. A few days later Talalu saw his wife fishing, and persuaded her to go back with him to the woods. The remaining natives secured their pardon by agreeing to kill their accomplices. Manale went to Talalu with a poisoned pudding. Talalu became suspicious and would not eat it. Then his wife and Manale set upon him and killed him, having first persuaded him to let them comb his hair. Ohuhu was afterwards killed by Manale and Temua, who may perhaps be identified with Taroa-meiva, the Tubuaian chief: none of the accounts mentions him by that name. Talalu's wife then returned to live with Williams.

It was a bloody business, and there is plenty of evidence of its truth. After this the treatment of the four surviving natives became even worse than before. McKoy, Mills, Brown, and Quintal seem to have used them as slaves, and when they did anything amiss they were flogged



and their lacerated backs were covered with salt. At last they rose against their masters and, arming themselves with muskets, in one day killed Williams, Mills, Martin, Brown, and—as some accounts say—Fletcher Christian. Quintal and McKoy escaped into the bush, but Smith was set upon and wounded. Young was the only one not attacked; indeed, according to Smith, it was he who had instigated the revolt.

But the massacre did not end there. Quintal and McKoy remained in the hills, where McKoy had a house, but the four natives returned to the settlement. One evening, when Young's wife was playing on the fife, Manale became jealous of Temua's singing to her, and seizing a musket shot him dead. He then joined Quintal and McKoy. Adams and Young sent Quintal a letter telling them to kill Manale, which they did: with the musket Manale had surrendered to show his good faith.

Young (or, as some say, the bereaved women) determined to put an end to the two surviving natives, Nehou and Hitihiti. He persuaded Brown's widow to go to bed with Hitihiti, warning her on no account to put her arm round his neck when she went to sleep. As soon as Hitihiti was asleep Young's wife killed him with an axe, while Young himself shot Nehou.

Young then sent word to Quintal and McKoy that they might come down to the settlement in safety. They suspected a trap, so Young cut off the murdered Tahitians' hands and despatched the women with them as proof.

Their fears allayed, Quintal and McKoy returned—the date is given as October 3, 1793—and the four Europeans lived on good terms for some time. The women they divided amongst themselves. Young took the widows of Williams and Christian, with three children; Smith took Mills's widow and two children, and the widows of the two Tahitian men; McKoy had Brown's widow and Quintal Martin's: all, of course, in addition to their existing wives, except Smith, who had lost his before the revolt began.

It was not long before they found that polygamy had its disadvantages, for the women, being now in the proportion of ten to four, began to give them endless trouble. They did not choose to stick to one man (one can hardly blame them, seeing that the men had the pleasure of variety) and lived promiscuously, changing their abodes as they felt inclined.

At the end of 1793 Young began to keep a journal, from which certain extracts have been preserved. From it we learn that in April 1794, the women became so discontented that they desired "to get some conveyance, to enable them to leave the island." They nagged until the men agreed to build a boat. She was launched on August 15, but, as Young says, "according to expectation she upset," which suggests that her builders had never had any intention of building a boat that would swim. It was probably fortunate for those dauntless ladies that they did not succeed in leaving Bounty Bay.

Their discontent persisted, however, and Young records that on November 11 the men discovered a conspiracy to kill them in their sleep. They were pardoned on promising never to give any cause "even to suspect their behaviour," but the men took the precaution of hiding two muskets in the bush for the use of any of them who might be fortunate to escape a subsequent attack, and they agreed to put to death the first woman who misbehaved. This threat was never carried out, although the women remained intractable and would hide themselves in the woods, armed with muskets, whenever they were displeased.

All this time the mutineers had never seen a ship, although on March 17, Captain Edwards, in the *Pandora*, having passed Ducie Island, discovered another which he named Lord Hood's Island. This must be Elizabeth or Henderson Island, for the discovery of which Edwards has never had the credit. He was then within 100 miles of Pitcairn, whose peak is visible for nearly 50, and had he sailed due west after leaving Ducie he must have discovered the mutineers. As it was, they saw no sail until May 1795, when a vessel was sighted approaching the island. Panic-stricken, they took to the hills. When they ventured from their hiding-places they found she had landed a party by some empty coconuts and a jack-knife which were left lying on the beach. A few months later they sighted another ship, close in. This time they were more alarmed than ever, but there was a tre-

mendous surf on the rocks and the vessel stood away to the south-east.

After this they seem to have lived on better terms with the women, and frequently dined at each other's houses. Then McKoy, who had once been employed in a Glasgow distillery, succeeded in producing a bottle of intoxicating liquor from the ti-root (*Dracæna terminalis*) which grew on the island. Quintal seconded his efforts by making the *Bounty's* copper boiler into a still. Frequent carousals followed, and after one of them McKoy, in a fit of delirium, tied a stone to his neck and hurled himself over the cliff into the sea and was drowned. This made so powerful an impression on the others that they resolved never again to touch spirits.

That was in 1798, the year after Young had abandoned keeping his journal, and in the following year Quintal lost his wife—the original one, we may suppose. He wanted another, but none of the free-lances in the island could have cared for the idea of taking him as a permanent husband, since it is said that on one occasion he punished his wife for not bringing enough fish home by biting off her ear. So he demanded either Young's wife or Smith's, but the husbands, now apparently more attached to their spouses than they had been some time previously, refused; whereupon Quintal threatened he would kill them. Having no doubt that he would carry out his threat if he had the chance, they made him drunk and despatched him with an axe.

Smith and Young were thus left the sole sur-

vivors of fifteen men who had landed on the island nine years before, and Young himself succumbed to an attack of asthma twelve months later: the first of the fifteen to die a natural death.

### § 3

Smith was now left alone on the island with eleven women and 23 children, all the offspring of the mutineers, since the natives had left none; nor had Williams, Martin, or Brown. During the last months of Young's life he and Smith had taken to holding services on Sunday, reading from a Bible and a Prayer Book which had come off the *Bounty*. But some time after Young's death the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Smith in a dream, warned him of the danger of his past wickedness, and called upon him to repent.

This dream had a profound effect upon Smith's mind, and there were no half-measures about his atonement. Not only did he convert the Tahitian women, but he took in hand the religious instruction of the children, who soon developed such a thirst for scriptural knowledge that he had little time to do anything but answer their questions. He taught them the Creed and made them say grace before and after meals; and every day at noon they recited this prayer:

"I will arise and go to my Father, and say unto him, Father I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy of being called thy Son."

Later he composed the following "for the Lord's Day Morning":

"Suffer me not, O Lord, to waste this Day in Sin or folly, but let me worship thee with much Delight; teach me to know more of thee and to Serve thee Better than I have ever done before, that I may be fitter to Dwell in heaven, where thy Worship and Service are everlasting. Amen."

Having noted in the Prayer Book that Ash Wednesday and Good Friday were appointed fast days, he got the impression that in well-ordered communities every Wednesday and Friday were fast days, and ordained them to be so kept, until years afterwards he discovered his mistake. Even then every Friday was kept as a fast day until his death, although his flock sometimes fainted for lack of food in the planting and harvest seasons, when their work was particularly hard.

Thus another eight years passed away, with those in England still ignorant of the *Bounty's* fate. Then, on February 6, 1808, nearly three years after Trafalgar had been fought and won, Captain Mayhew Folger, of the American ship *Topaz*, from Boston, landed on Pitcairn Island in the hope of securing seal-skins for the China market, and solved the mystery which had puzzled the Admiralty and the public in England for so long.

By that time the population was about thirty-five. All spoke English, and acknowledged Smith as their "father and commander," and

had been brought up and educated by him "in a religious and moral way."

Smith was quite frank about his identity, spoke openly of the mutiny, the activities of the mutineers, and the island's history. When Captain Folger sailed Smith gave him the *Bounty's* chronometer, made by Kendall, which may be seen in the Museum of the United Service Institution to-day.

#### § 4

No British ship visited Pitcairn until 1814, when two frigates, the *Briton* and the *Tagus*, while cruising in the Pacific, came upon it by chance rather than by design, since it had been wrongly charted by Carteret. Captain Sir Thomas Staines, of the *Briton*, had heard nothing of Folger's report, and was astonished to find the island peopled by English-speaking inhabitants. Smith was still there, with seven of the Tahitian women who had accompanied the mutineers; the remainder of the population consisted of thirty-eight children and young people, the eldest of whom was Thursday October Christian, now a strapping young man of twenty-five.

By that time Smith had taken the name of John Adams: his real name, which he had changed because he deserted his ship to join the *Bounty*. It may be that, after his reformation, his idea was to slough off with his assumed name

a record of which he had no reason to be proud. But again he made no attempt to conceal his identity, although he must have felt some misgivings when he sighted those two King's ships from the heights above Bounty Bay.

Sir Thomas, however, was so impressed by "the correct sense of Religion" which Smith had instilled into the minds of the younger generation that, instead of taking him back to England to stand his trial, he allowed him to remain as the patriarch of that well-regulated community of Tahitian women and children of the mutineers.

Although Adams was as deeply implicated as any of the *Bounty's* company, few will question that merciful decision. The Admiralty did not, and when Captain Beechey visited the island in H.M.S. *Blossom* eleven years later, he too applauded the manner in which Adams was bringing up his people, and described the harmony and contentment in which they lived.

Before the *Blossom* sailed Adams asked Captain Beechey to perform the marriage ceremony over him and Sarah, the aged Tahitian woman who had been his companion for thirty years. It was his custom to marry the young couples, using a communal gold ring kept for the purpose, which had belonged to Young, but himself he could not marry, and he was much exercised in his mind that he was living in sin with his mate, although she was then old and bedridden.



## § 5

It has always struck me as curious that the accounts which Smith (or Adams) gave to the first captains who called at the island should have substantially differed. Captain Folger, in his log entry dated February 6, 1808, states that Adams told him that soon after the *Bounty* reached the island, "one of their party ran mad and drowned himself"; this was several years before the native rising. The second mate corroborated this in a statement to Lieutenant Fitzmaurice when the *Topaz* called at Valparaiso, and named Christian as the man.

In 1814, on the visit of the *Briton* and the *Tagus*, Adams told Captain Pipon of the *Tagus* that Christian had been shot by a Tahitian a year after the origin of the settlement (and definitely before the general rising), while one of the younger generation told Lieutenant Shillibeer, R.M., of the *Briton*, exactly the same story on board the ship.

Yet in 1825 Adams told Captain Beechey, with a wealth of circumstantial detail, that Christian had been killed in the general rising. Smith was never able to point out Christian's grave. If Christian died on the island, why should Adams have told three inconsistent stories of his fate? But if he had something to conceal, might not the lapse of time have caused him to forget his previous statement and so account for the inconsistency? Can Adams have lied be-

cause Christian had left the island and sworn him to secrecy?

It is not inconceivable that Christian should have built a boat and got away. Or he may have left the island in some ship that called in before the *Topaz* came. It is even possible, although less likely, that he persuaded the captain of the *Topaz* to give him a passage to South America. There must have been money on board the *Bounty* when she was seized, and we have never heard what became of it.

Sir John Laughton, in his article on Fletcher Christian in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, considered it "in a high degree probable" that Christian escaped from the island and returned to England. There is some evidence to support this theory. About the year 1809 Captain Peter Heywood was walking along Fore Street, Plymouth, when he saw in front of him a man who instantly reminded him of Christian. He quickened his pace. The stranger turned, gave him one look, and took to his heels. More firmly convinced that the man was Christian, Heywood ran after him. But the stranger outdistanced him and, taking several short turns, disappeared. Captain Heywood finally decided to take no further action. He never saw the man again, but about the same time it was rumoured in the Lake District that Christian had been paying secret visits to an aunt who lived in the neighbourhood.

Whether Christian did indeed return to England there is nothing more to show. Although

I feel there is a certain doubt, the weight of the evidence inclines me to believe that he was killed on Pitcairn Island, probably in the native rising, and Adams's inconsistent stories may be explained by the faulty reporting of his hearers: even though sailors are trained to accuracy.

It is for each who studies the story to make up his mind, but years before the whereabouts of the mutineers became known, one of the most interesting frauds in the history of travel literature appeared, purporting to show Christian's movements after the mutiny.

This is a very scarce book, published in 1796, and entitled *Letters from Mr. Fletcher Christian: Containing a Narrative of the Transactions on board His Majesty's ship "Bounty," Before and after the Mutiny. With his subsequent Voyages and Travels in South America.*

So far as I am aware, the identity of the author has never been discovered, but he was certainly not Fletcher Christian. The first three letters, supposedly written from Christian to a friend, closely follow the accounts given in Bligh's printed narrative, some passages being almost transcriptions, but (rather amusingly) the book acquits Bligh "of having contributed, in the smallest degree, to the promotion of our conspiracy by any harsh or ungentleman-like conduct on his part."

With Letter Four fact ceases and fiction begins. Instead of making for Pitcairn, the mutineers steered a course for Juan Fernandez, where they remained some weeks and then sailed

for South America. The *Bounty* was wrecked in a gale in which all but Christian were said to have perished. He himself was befriended by a Spaniard of noble birth, and having remained in Chile for some time, accompanied his benefactor to Seville, whence he wrote his letters, promising a further instalment of his adventures.

This never appeared, but the book aroused enough interest for a second edition to be called for, and ten years later the writer must have found it amusing to compare his fictitious narrative with the facts which then came to light. Let us hope he had the sense of humour to admit that facts had beaten his fiction.

## § 6

A few years before the call of the *Blossom*, John Buffet, a seamen in a passing whale-ship, the *Cyrus*, had volunteered to act as the islanders' schoolmaster and pastor. Another seaman, John Evans, deserted the ship to accompany him. Buffet took himself as seriously as Adams did. Sunday was devoted wholly to divine service, prayer-reading, and serious meditation; the women were not even allowed to cook. Buffet was in the habit of reading his sermons three times, lest any passage should escape the attention of his congregation.

Three years after the *Blossom's* visit an even more devout evangelist appeared. This was George Hun Nobbs, who described himself as

"the unacknowledged son of a marquis." He had begun his career as a midshipman, and, tiring of an adventurous life, he decided to make his way to Pitcairn, and devote the rest of his days to the service of the settlement.

This astonishing resolve was not a passing whim, for it took him several years to reach the island. He eventually arrived in an 18-ton launch, with one companion, who died shortly after landing. Adams received him kindly, and seeing him to be a man of more education than Buffet, appointed him schoolmaster. Buffet resented being displaced, as well he might, but Adams insisted, and before he died arranged that Nobbs should become pastor. Nobbs married Sarah, the granddaughter of Fletcher Christian, and since Buffet married a daughter of Edward Young and Evans a daughter of Adams, three fresh strains of blood were introduced into the community.

Adams died in 1829, at the age of sixty-five, and two years later the shortage of water forced the whole population, eighty-seven in all, to move to Tahiti, by order of the British Government and by consent of Pomarre, the reigning queen. Houses were provided for them, and a tract of land set aside for their use. But the climate did not suit them, and they were appalled by the easy-going morals of their mothers' people. In a few months they were back on their beloved island.

Nobbs returned with them. But although his services as pastor and schoolmaster, and his

knowledge of surgery and medicine, were of undoubted value to the community, his influence was not so strong as Adams's had been. All might have gone well had it not been for the unexpected arrival of an elderly adventurer called Joshua Hill, who declared himself to be a close relative of the Duke of Bedford, and announced that the British Government had authorized him to represent the Crown on Pitcairn Island.

There was not a word of truth in this, but he easily imposed upon the naïve islanders, who were only too anxious to be recognized by Great Britain. Hill soon ousted Nobbs from leadership. He built a prison, appointed privy councillors, and framed a code of laws under which he promptly convicted the Europeans of high treason. He had the unfortunate Buffet strung up by his hands in the church and flogged; then fined him three barrels of yams. Nobbs and Buffet were finally compelled to leave the island. Then H.M.S. *Actæon* appeared upon the scene. Unluckily for Hill, her commander was the Duke of Bedford's son, Lord Edward Russell. Inquiries led to Hill being unmasked, and he was subsequently deported by the order of the British Government.

The exiles returned, and once more peace reigned in the settlement. Its position was strengthened in 1838, when Captain Elliot, of H.M.S. *Fly*, helped the people to draw up regulations for the appointment of a native-born inhabitant as Chief Magistrate, in whose election

everyone over the age of eighteen was to share. Captain Elliott installed the first holder of the office, and presented him with a Union Jack as an ensign of British protection. In this unobtrusive manner Pitcairn Island became a partner of the Empire, a position it holds to this day, under the jurisdiction of the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

It was, however, only the people's love of home that kept it so. In 1856 the growing scarcity of food compelled them to make another move: this time to Norfolk Island, which had recently been abandoned as a penal settlement.

The emigration must have been the most extraordinary on record. The whole population of 194 souls embarked in one ship, and the move cost the Government £6,000. Norfolk had many advantages over Pitcairn, and the settlers were amazed at the stone houses and the horses, but before long the call of their rocky island became too strong for some of them. First, two Young families returned; then four more, including John Buffet's son, Robert, and his wife, and Fletcher Christian's grandson Thursday October, with his wife and nine children, making a total of forty-three in all. Nobbs remained on Norfolk Island until his death in 1884.

Thus for the first time the community was separated. The returned exiles rebuilt their houses and took up the thread of their life once more. They never left the island again, and there the survivors and their descendants live to-day. When a steamer is sighted the *Bounty's*

bell is tolled vigorously and a red flag is hoisted on the cliffs. In a few minutes a whale-boat puts out from Bounty Bay, ten young men pulling at the oars, bareheaded and barefooted, with a helmsman wielding a huge sweep as rudder over the pointed stern. With them come a few women, clad in straight cotton frocks, carrying baskets of fruit and curios. No sea-gangway is lowered for them; not even a rope ladder. None is needed. Ropes are flung over the steamer's rail and up they swarm: men, women, and even children.

Once on deck they start to barter their goods for lengths of cloth, hooks and eyes, soap, needles, buttons, and writing-paper. A cake of soap will buy a necklace of perfectly matched shells or one of beads made from a native bean. For an old coat you may secure a rich supply of pineapples, mangoes, bananas, and green-skinned oranges, or perhaps a model sailing-ship bearing the maker's name, usually a Christian or a Young. Of money, boots, and heavy clothing they have no need. And if it happens to be a Saturday they will not barter, for Saturday is their Sabbath, and they must accept what you offer them, without question.

They are a finely-made people, with cheerful manners and honest, open faces. They speak good English, but with an unusual accent, which is peculiar to the island. They are intensely loyal to the King, just as they were to Queen Victoria, who sent them a harmonium for their church. In the war several of them enlisted in



the Australian Imperial Force, and two cousins named Quintal earned the reputation of being among the bravest in a hard-fighting regiment.

Nowadays a few of the young men leave the island to go to sea. When in England some years ago two of them who were working in a steamer of the New Zealand Line (whose ships call at Pitcairn on their way across the Pacific) visited the birthplace of Fletcher Christian at Moreland Close, Cockermouth, a farm-house at the foot of the range of hills which divides Loweswater, Buttermere, and Crummock Lakes from the lowland reaching down to the Solway Firth.

Fletcher's descendant, Parkin Christian, is Chief Magistrate of the island to-day, a man of fine physique and great charm of manner, who is looked to by all for advice and guidance. Recently he and some of the islanders salvaged the *Bounty's* rudder, and Mr. James Norman Hall most generously sent me a fragment of this historic relic, which he had received from one of Midshipman Young's descendants on the island: a small, tinder-like, worm-eaten morsel of English oak which had once steered so many men to so many strange and tragic ends.

The islanders are still profoundly religious, although they have exchanged the simple faith John Adams taught their ancestors for the tenets of Seventh Day Adventism, whose missionaries are responsible for the education of the children. They have learnt to be kind to others less fortunate than themselves, and some time ago they

determined to help the "Save the Children Fund." The community voted £11 in money, while the women made clothes and packed them in tarred barrels, which were set adrift in the hope that they might be sighted by a passing ship. These barrels were picked up by S.S. *Loch Katrine* and ultimately reached London and the children for whom they were intended.

Thus they live, isolated and remote, leading healthy, simple lives: fishing, cultivating their gardens, and making their souvenirs, but apparently content, on what the Chief Magistrate (one of the Christians) in a letter he wrote me recently described as "a very good little spot in the Pacific," and still honouring the memory of that remarkable man who, mutineer though he may have been, must have his peculiar place in the roll of Empire as the builder of as strange a colony as the world has ever known.

## THE SHIP'S COMPANY

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM BLIGH, commander.  
Subsequently Governor of New South Wales  
and Vice-Admiral of the Blue. Died  
December 6, 1817.

John Fryer, master. Open-boat voyage. Master  
in Royal Navy until 1812. Died May 26,  
1817.

William Cole, boatswain. Open-boat voyage.

William Peckover, gunner. Open-boat voyage.

William Purcell, carpenter. Open-boat voyage.  
Died in Haslar Hospital, March 10, 1834,  
the last survivor of the *Bounty*.

John Huggan, surgeon. Died at Tahiti, Decem-  
ber 9, 1789.

Thomas Denman Ledward, joined ship as A.B.  
Acted as surgeon's mate, and as surgeon after  
the death of Huggan. Open-boat voyage.  
Lost at sea 1789, while returning to Europe  
in the *Welfare*, of Rotterdam.

Fletcher Christian, master's mate, promoted act-  
ing lieutenant. Probably killed by natives  
in Pitcairn Island about 1793.

William Elphinstone, master's mate. Open-boat  
voyage. Died at Batavia, November 1789.

Thomas Hayward, midshipman. Open-boat voyage. Subsequently lieutenant in the *Pandora*. Drowned when in command of H.M. sloop *Swift*, which foundered during a typhoon in the China Sea.

John Hallett, midshipman. Open-boat voyage. Died when lieutenant in H.M.S. *Penelope*.

George Stewart, acting midshipman, promoted acting master's mate. Drowned in the wreck of the *Pandora*, August 29, 1791.

Peter Heywood, acting midshipman. Convicted by court-martial and subsequently pardoned. Rose to rank of captain. Died February 10, 1831.

Edward Young, acting midshipman. Died of asthma in Pitcairn, December 25, 1800.

Peter Linkletter, quartermaster. Open-boat voyage. Died at Batavia, November 1789.

John Norton, quartermaster. Killed by natives at Tofua, May 2, 1789.

George Simpson, quartermaster's mate. Open-boat voyage.

James Morrison, boatswain's mate. Convicted by court-martial and subsequently pardoned. Went down with all hands as gunner in the *Blenheim*, 1807.

John Mills, gunner's mate. Killed by natives in Pitcairn, 1793.

Charles Norman, carpenter's mate. Acquitted by court-martial.

Thomas McIntosh, carpenter's crew. Acquitted by court-martial.

Lawrence Lebogue, sailmaker. Open-boat voyage.

Joseph Coleman, armourer. Acquitted by court-martial.

Charles Churchill, master-at-arms (or ship's corporal). Murdered by Mathew Thompson in Tahiti, April 1790.

John Samuel, clerk and steward. Open-boat voyage. Rose to the rank of paymaster.

Thomas Burkett, A.B. Convicted by court-martial and hanged, October 29, 1792.

Michael Byrn, A.B. (fiddler and boatkeeper). Acquitted by court-martial.

Thomas Ellison, A.B. Convicted by court-martial and hanged.

Thomas Hall, A.B. (cook). Open-boat voyage. Died at Batavia, 1789.

Henry Hillbrant, A.B. (cooper). Drowned in the wreck of the *Pandora*.

Robert Lamb, A.B. (butcher). Open-boat voyage. Died on voyage from Batavia to England, 1789.

Isaac Martin, A.B. Killed by natives in Pitcairn, 1793.

William McKoy, A.B. Committed suicide in Pitcairn, 1795.

John Millward, A.B. Convicted by court-martial and hanged.

William Muspratt, A.B. (tailor and commander's steward). Convicted by court-martial and subsequently reprieved.

Mathew Quintal, A.B. Killed by Young and Smith in Pitcairn, 1798.

Richard Skinner, A.B. Drowned in the wreck of the *Pandora*.

Alexander Smith, A.B. Died in Pitcairn, March 5, 1829.

John Smith, A.B. (cook and commander's servant). Open-boat voyage.

John Sumner, A.B. Drowned in the wreck of the *Pandora*.

Robert Tinkler, A.B. Open-boat voyage. He joined the ship with a view to becoming a midshipman, and was Fryer's brother-in-law. Rose to rank of post-captain.

Mathew Thompson, A.B. Killed by natives in Tahiti, April 1790.

James Valentine, A.B. Died at sea, October 9, 1788.

John Williams, A.B. Killed by natives in Pitcairn, 1793.

David Nelson, botanist. Open-boat voyage. Died at Kupang, July 20, 1789.

William Brown, botanist's assistant. Killed by natives in Pitcairn, 1793.